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"I BELIEVE"
AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY
GUY THORNE
Author of "When it Was Dark," "First it was Ordained,"
"Made in His Image," etc., etc.

LONDON
F. V. WHITE & CO., Limited
14, BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1907

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

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DEDICATION

To F. V. WHITE, Esquire.

My dear White,
The publication of this book is a business arrangement between you and me. Its dedication however has nothing to do with the relations of author and publisher in those capacities, but is merely an expression of friendship and esteem. This then is to remind you of pleasant hours we have spent together on the other side of the channel, in your house at London, and my house in Kent.

Yours ever sincerely,

Guy Thorne.

"I BELIEVE"

I

"I BELIEVE"

"Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision."

When I was a boy I made an occasional invasion of my father's study, and in the absence of more congenial matter tried to extract some amusement from the shelves devoted to Christian apologetics. At any rate the pictures of the portly divines, which sometimes prefaced their polemics, interested me, and I was sometimes allured to read a few pages of their scripture. I remember that I enjoyed the sub-acid flavour of Bishop Butler's advertisement, prefixed to the First Edition of his *Analogy*, at an early age, and I have thought lately that in certain circles one hundred and seventy years have not greatly modified the mental attitude.

Hear what the Rector of Stanhope who, as Horace Walpole said, was shortly to be "Wafted to the see of Durham in a cloud of metaphysics," says about his literary contemporaries—

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious, and accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Perhaps the difference between the times of George the Second and Edward the Seventh may be best discerned in the status and calibre of the popular penmen who in either age have found, or furnished amusement in a tilt against the Catholic Faith.

The man in the street, as we know him, did not exist in the eighteenth century. He is the predominant person to-day, and he requires the services of able authors to assure him of immunity, when he is inclined to frolic away from chastity or integrity, much as did the county members who pocketed the bribes of Sir Robert Walpole and prated of patriotism.

Fortunately for society the man in the street is a very decent fellow, and generally finds out before long that Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness. A man may enjoy posing as an agnostic when he wants an excuse for—as the negro said—"doing what he dam please," but when he takes to himself a wife, and children are born to him, a certain anxiety as to the continuity and perpetuation of these relationships begins to show itself. A man who has lost a little child, or waited in agonizing suspense to hear the physician's verdict, when sickness overshadows his home, discovers that he needs something beyond negations, something that will bring life and immortality to light again within his soul.

Moreover, the man in the street finds it necessary to come to some decision on other problems of existence. He is a citizen and must needs exercise his enfranchisement and give his vote at an election now and again.

He must help to decide whether the State shall ignore religion and establish a system of ethical education, of which the ultimate sanction is social convenience, or maintain the thesis that Creed and Character are mutually inter-dependent.

As he pays his poor rate wrathfully, or with resignation, its annual increase reminds him of the necessity of curing or eliminating the unfit. When he reads of Belgian and Prussian colonial enterprise, or ponders on the perplexing problem of the Black Belt which the Southern States must solve, he is compelled to consider whether it is true that "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," or whether this shall be accounted as another of the delusions of Saul of Tarsus whom Governor Festus found to be mad.

Indeed, our friend, the man in the street, when he becomes a family man, without any pretensions to be a man of family, very often finds himself face to face with other problems. Shall he simply sing with the Psalmist "Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them," or shall he be guided by the gloss of a modern interpreter who maintains that the oriental quiver was designed to hold but two or three arrows at most?

Even when the plain man confines his interests to his business and seeks relaxations in "sport" alone, endeavouring to evade the puzzles of politics and avoid all theologized inquiry, he cannot escape from ethical consideration. Professionalism in athletics and questions of betting and bribery contend with his conviction that there is something which ennobles man in running and striving for mastery, and it is futile to curse the bookmaker when his clients are so many, his occupation so lucrative.

The average man gets little guidance from pulpit or press. It is dull work reading sermons, even if sermons came in his way. From time to time some eloquent bishop or canon is reported in the Monday morning papers, but journalists know that the publication of a summary with, in the case of a few of the preachers, some epigrams or denunciations, is all that can be permitted or expected. These may arouse the attention to the existence of evils, but give no guiding principle for their cure.

The habit of attendance at some place of worship is easily abandoned in the days of bachelor freedom, and rarely regained in maturer years. Men for the most part find the preacher unconvincing. The usual audience does not desire discussion of difficulties. When the honest instinct of devotional worship is gratified by common praise and prayer, the people who regularly go to church, elderly, and orthodox in their own way, resent a demand upon their intellectual exertion, and the Northern farmer of Tennyson hardly misrepresents them, "I thought he said what he ought to ha' said and I comed away." The great Nonconformist societies may, in some congregations, give a larger latitude to the preacher, but his freedom is rather in the direction of divinity than of ethics. Mr. Rockefeller is a prominent pillar of Protestantism in the States, and Mr. Jabez Balfour, in another congregation at Croydon, apparently knew no qualms of conscience before his actual conviction, which was public, of sin.

There is an old proverb which tells us that "A man is either a fool or a philosopher at forty"—and, though proverbs are often only venerable prejudices in disguise, it is true that a man, who has attained his eighth lustrum and is of average ability, generally has come to certain definite conclusions as to the rudimentary laws of health. He knows enough about his body to avoid fatal errors in diet, and has learned the necessity of exercise and fresh air. But when he is called upon, as a member of the body politic, to decide questions of ethics on which the sanitation of society must depend, he feels himself at a loss. To many people it will seem a hard saying that a man must be either a fool or a philosopher at forty, but long ere he has reached that age he will have encountered problems of philosophy which it is impossible to shirk if he is to do his duty as a free man.

St. Paul, it is true, when writing to a Christian Community in Asia Minor, bids them "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy." And the unfortunate habit of Bible Christians, of tearing a text from a treatise and making it into a precept, has thrown a sort of discredit upon philosophic thinking, while the mass of mankind will always prefer rules to principles of conduct. But in vain do we clamour against intellectual complications which are the inevitable endowment of these days. Life is necessarily intricate, subtle and anxious, and Democracy has made of each man a ruler and governor in his degree. Is it possible to point to a single principle which shall be a motive and a standard of duty, which shall establish a synthetic method after the ruthless analysis of the later Victorian days?

How searching that analysis has been! Fifty years ago the man in the street might rarely read the Bible, but he had a tolerably assured conviction that the Bible was infallible, however resolutely he might refuse its interpretation by an infallible church.

Then

> "...the Essays and Reviews debate
> Begins to tell on the public mind, and Colenso's views have weight."

Plain people were taught to look on the Old Testament as a library of Hebrew literature containing not only poetry and history, but romance.

When Colenso's book first appeared, Matthew Arnold deprecated its publication since it brought criticisms familiar to men of culture before the notice of the public, without considering how the beliefs of "the vulgar" might be upset.

The supercilious apostle of "sweetness and light," himself contributed largely in later years to the general confusion in men's minds, and the New Testament criticism has been introduced to the general public by Mr.

Arnold's accomplished niece.

Our friend, the man in the street, was all unprepared!

What had he ever been taught of theology, the Divine word to man? In his school-days, if his father was an income tax payer he probably had a weekly lesson in "Divinity," when he construed a few verses of the Gospels in the Greek Testament, and showed up to his master, now and then, a map of the journeying of the Apostle Paul in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe. If his father expected him to be confirmed, in due course, some lessons in the catechism were added for his benefit, but prudent pedagogues took care not to endanger the popularity of a school, whether public or private, by any definite teaching which might be accused of being dogmatic. The head-master was probably a person of unsuspected orthodoxy, with a possible deanery or bishopric in view for his days of superannuation. His sermons in chapel used to set a fine standard of conduct before the boys, and were gracefully free from all mention of controversial questions. In due course they were published with the title *Sermons at Yarrow*, and enterprising parents turning over their pages would find little to criticize and much to admire. The Cross, if presented at all in these publications, was so bespangled with rhetorical jewellery that "Jews might kiss and Infidels adore." And the children of Israel as public-school boys were never painfully conscious of any great difference between themselves and their baptized companions. But unfortunately only a few of the boys came under the civilizing instruction of the Chief. Bright young athletes from Oxford and Cambridge, lured into the ranks of pedagogy by their love of football and cricket, were the assistant-masters. A regular salary with holiday for a fourth of the year, the prospect of early marriage, and a remunerative boarding-house, attracted them to a pleasant position, and they had no wish to rebel against the time-table which made them teachers of "Divinity" for at least one hour in the week. All educated people should be tolerably familiar with a book so largely used in quotation as the Bible, and the succession of the Kings of Israel and Judah could be used in strengthening the memory, whilst the stories of "Jehu and those other Johnnies you know" were by no means devoid of picturesque incident. Greek Testament could also be made useful in the acquisition of a vocabulary, or in a lesson showing the difference between classical and vernacular Greek. "Of course we must leave the application of these studies to conduct to *Home influence*," the headmasters would blandly observe, and between parent and pedagogue the teaching of the Christian Faith fell neglected to the ground.

What chance had the boys so brought up, of forming any conception of the essential truths of Religion? A superficial acquaintance with the stories of Hebrew history, a perfunctory attendance at chapel, some well-meant exhortations on the subject of temperance and chastity, as the catechism was revived in their memories before they were brought to be confirmed by the Bishop, and some ability "to translate and give the context" of a few phrases from the Greek texts of the Gospels, these were their intellectual religious equipment for a life of fierce temptation from within and without. And when they encountered the storm and stress of modern social life they found that the critics had taken from them the old reverence of nursery days for "God's Book," their school training had taught them only a rough code of honour, and their chief restraint from any ignoble impulse was a feeling that to do certain deeds was not "good form."

A little lower down the social ladder the man in the street has fared no better in his boyhood. In the public elementary schools he has had a half-hour's lesson in Scripture and catechism five days of the week, and annually the Diocesan, or the School Board, Inspector came round to ascertain whether the Syllabus of religious teaching had been duly followed. But only when devout parish priests had a talent for teaching and a love for boys and girls was any attempt made to give children a *religion*, and even in this case not very much could be done for those who left school for ever when they were twelve years old.

A generation ago Lord Sherbrooke, on the extension of the franchise, told his contemporaries that it was time to begin "to educate our masters"—but we have not gone very far in our instruction of Christian Sociology, though as yet we have not adopted the Utilitarian basis of morals accepted by the French Republic, and endeavoured to establish principles of duty towards man without any reference whatever to a duty towards God.

Can any one be surprised if the plain man be perplexed when he is called upon to decide questions of economy and morality without any guiding principle? As a matter of fact he makes no such effort. "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decisions," but the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. The puzzled popular vote is but as the swing of the pendulum, first to this side, then to the other. "These fellows have been no good, let us give the others a show."

Yet assuredly there is a principle which is guidance and strength if only men could discern it. There are Teachers who can tell men of its beneficent power, but they are as yet few in number, and their voices are not sufficiently strong. When once these can get a hearing, men welcome their evangel and find in it a guide of life.

I am persuaded that just as Bishop Butler, when he perused the preface of his *Analogy*, had no prescience of the young fellow of Lincoln, who was in a few years to give the Christian faith a fresh hold in the hearts of the common people, who gladly heard him, so in our time many of our Bishops seem unable to perceive the dawn of another "day of the Lord."

Indeed, it is our misfortune in England that Bishops are almost necessarily bad leaders. We are told when an election to the Papacy is imminent that this or that Cardinal is in the list of "Papabili"—a possible Pope—so in like manner we may almost select amongst the undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge our future diocesans. These are men clever, shrewd, and hard-working, of estimable private character, and not without some modest patrimony. Early entered in the race for preferment, ambitious, and yet, *mirabile dictu*, devout, they are endowed first of all with the true qualification for episcopacy, a capacity for compromise and a pliant

political mind. *Sic itur ad astra* the excellent curate or tutor, the courteous and accomplished chaplain to the Bishop, the eloquent canon and ecclesiastical courtier is consecrated and enthroned. Henceforward for the rest of his days he must hurry from his study table, crowded with correspondence, to his confirmations, his diocesan society meetings, and his weary, humiliating attendance at the House of Lords. What wonder if Bishops discourage new ventures of faith, who have no time for thinking, no time for reading, and perhaps, sometimes, too little opportunity for prayer!

And so we find them not unwilling to accommodate the Catholic Faith to the popular prejudice of the moment, acquiescing in an undogmatic, undenominational, more or less Christian creed. Popularity becomes the very breath of their nostrils, and they proceed to hide in an appendix to the Prayerbook, the hymn *Quicunque vult*.

Yet the discerning can see that now is no time for keeping in the background the great truths of religion. Already men are being prepared in many ways to receive them.

The Christian Faith in England is no longer hampered by certain arbitrary axioms of the Puritan Divines. In the sixteenth century men were almost compelled by the exigencies of the situation to discover some Infallible authority which they could set up over against the Infallibility of the Church of Rome, and they endeavoured to treat Holy Scripture as though the great library of Jewish and Christian writers contained a complete code of consistent legislation. A text was a convincing argument for the Divine right of Kings, or for binding them in chains, for the burning of witches or the destruction of a shrine, and although in the two following centuries the Protestant ministers taught men to modify this conception, and to realize the difference between the Old Testament and the New, the popular idea of Revelation allowed small scope for theological inquiry. The biographies of our literary men of the Victorian period have shown us how they were tempted to separate themselves from all public communion with the Church, by their misgiving that the Church was committed to an impossible position. Carlyle groaned for what he called an “exit from Houndsditch,” some deliverance from the Rabbinic interpretation and use of the Bible. Things are very different to-day, as Henry Sidgwick says in a letter to Alfred Lord Tennyson published by his son in a recent memoir. “The years pass, the struggle with what Carlyle used to call ‘Hebrew old clothes’ is over, Freedom is won.” And in the result a scientific criticism of the Old and New Testament is found to be compatible with, and often a compulsion to an acceptance of the Christian creed, not the creed of Calvin, or the Westminster Confession, but the reasoned statement of Nicæa. The student of physical science no longer believes that if he goes to church he must be taken to accept the cosmogony of Genesis, and on his side he no longer stumbles at the difficulty of miraculous events. He knows too much about the influence of mind over matter to say that it is impossible that Jesus Christ and His Apostles should have healed the paralytic and made the blind to see and the deaf to hear. He is no longer “cocksure” of his capability of drawing a line of division between the organic and the inorganic. He can conceive of the existence of spirits which can control and modify the ordinary laws of life. He finds it probable that evolution is not exhausted when Man has come into being, and can look forward to a spiritual existence without suspecting himself of superstition. Sacraments, the union of the spiritual with the material, seem to him to be in accordance with the laws of the Universe, and he would never now-a-days stigmatize them as “Magic.” However he may explain the methods by which cures were wrought upon the afflicted, the scientific man of to-day would not accuse St. Luke of falsehood because he tells us that, “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them.” Indeed the man of science knows himself to be on the track of discoveries which will show us secrets of personality and spiritual possession which will banish for ever the absurd incredulity of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Who now-a-days would assert that “miracles do not happen,” when men like Sir Oliver Lodge are laboriously discovering some few of these laws of the Universe which give us these portents and signs? Who dares to sneer at Parthenogenesis or repeat the slander of Celsus about the Mother of God? Men only who have grown rusty in reposing on their past reputations and cannot see that materialism as a philosophy is dead. Day by day fresh evidence of the power of the spirit over matter bursts upon us. A plea for “philosophic doubt” of Professor Huxley’s infallibility is no longer necessary. The very distinction between matter and spirit grows more and more difficult as science develops analytical power. The minds of men are being prepared again to receive that Supreme revelation which told of the wedding of the earth and heaven, the taking of the Manhood into God.

In truth, this is the one principle which can give men guidance in the tangled intricacy of modern life. It is necessary to salvation, *now*, not hereafter only, to believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For, first of all, men need to be saved from the apathy of despair. They need some hope that there is an answer to the riddle of the Universe. Let them once begin to feel that it *may* be true that the very God cares for His creatures and has made His love for them manifest by taking to Himself the body, mind and spirit of man, and joining for ever human nature to the Godhead, then through the darkness comes a human voice saying—

> “O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in Myself.
> Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
> But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
> And thou must love Me who have died for thee.”

A man regains his self-respect when once he has escaped from the paralyzing sense that his is only

> “a life of nothings nothing worth

From that first nothing ere our birth
To that last nothing under earth."

And there is only one starting-point for those who journey on this quest of an answer to the enigma of life. They must resolutely abandon the long travelled "*a priori* road." They must understand that the science of to-day is not tied to any materialistic axioms, that metaphysic cannot be ignored by the physician, and that no competent scientist to-day would say of the Resurrection of Jesus on which ultimately depends His claims to our adoration, "*That could not happen*." We know enough now of the laws of the Universe to know that we do not know them all.

So some of us perceive that what is needed to-day is to arrest the attention of the man in the street, to get him to perceive that Christianity has much more to say for itself than he suspected, and that Christian Philosophy will place in his hand a clue which will guide him in the labyrinth of life.

"I say the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it."

We must set men free from phrases and get them to think. It suits the game of the party politician to pretend that ethics are easily self-evident, and that there is a simple fundamental religion on which all men are agreed; but there is a question which must be insistently urged, and upon the answer to which all things depend, "What think ye of Christ?"

Probably nothing has done more to alienate the man in the street from religious observance than the hypocritical pretence that all men are agreed about "simple Bible teaching." He knows well enough that what really matters is whether a man believes or not that God became man. If ever the Labour Party should definitely declare for elementary education without religious teaching it will be because the men whose children attend the elementary schools know that they cannot read the New Testament without asking, "Is it true?"

"Did Jesus Christ really die and rise again the third day according to the Scriptures?" "Did Jesus Christ go up into heaven in the sight of the apostles till a cloud received Him?" "Did Mary's Son come to her as other babies come?" "Was Joseph Jesus Christ's real father?" Our members of Parliament who have no leisure to know their own children, who keep them in the nursery till it is time for them to go to the Preparatory School, who leave their training to the governess and the head-master, may talk about "the cruelty of the religious differences which hinder the establishment of an efficient system of education for the children of the State." But the men and the mothers who live with their children and talk to them about their lessons, know that a child will insist upon an answer to its questions. A father of a family in the artisan and labouring classes, if he be at all intelligent, loses all respect for ministers of the Gospel who pretend that there is no difficulty about the simple Gospel story, and losing his self-respect for the men who have appointed themselves his teachers, he is tempted to throw all theology aside. And if he ventures on this despairing expedient he finds himself in mental confusion again over ethics instead of theology, and there arises a prospect of anarchy and disorder. Capital is timid, so enterprise is checked. Poverty increases and riot follows, and it all ends, not now-a-days in the Napoleonic "whiff of grape-shot," but in the rattle of the maxim in the streets and the desolation of a thousand homes.

The experience of all civilization is that you cannot separate morality from religion. When the Romans lost their faith in the old gods and became "undenominational," civic virtue decayed. When the genius of the Empire was set up for a universal Deity and men were bidden as good citizens to burn their few grains of incense before the statue of the reigning Emperor—the representative of an ordered and moral state—we know what happened. You cannot make an abstraction alive and deify Government. Laws, which have the sanction only of expediency, do but furnish mankind with exercise in evasion. Indefinite belief in the existence of "something not ourselves which makes for righteousness" has no motive force, and though men may rub on in some fashion or other by following ancient custom, and the law of use and wont, this can only be done in quiet times. And ours are not quiet times; indeed, the air is thick with principles which are forcing themselves into expression. The principles of Nationality or Cosmopolitanism, the comity of nations and the limits of destruction, international trades unionism, and the laws of marriage are recurring items upon the programme of every social science congress. All these dark questions are forced upon the attentions of men, and never was there greater need of some synthetic philosophy which may help us in their exploration. Are we going to put Christianity aside and rule out theology from our calculations?

I may quote the testimony of the late Sir Leslie Stephen here. Every one knows that he held no brief to defend orthodoxy—

> "To proclaim unsectarian Christianity is, in circuitous language, to proclaim that Christianity is dead. The love of Christ, as representing the ideal perfection of human nature, may indeed be still a powerful motive, and powerful whatever the view which we take of Christ's character. The advocates of the doctrine in its more intellectual form represent this passion as the true essence of Christianity. They assert with obvious sincerity of conviction that it is the leverage by which alone the world can be moved. But, as they would themselves admit, this conception would be preposterous if, with Strauss, we regarded Christ as a mere human being. Our regard for Him might differ in degree, but would not differ in kind, from our regard for Socrates or for Pascal. It would be impossible to consider it as an overmastering and all-powerful influence. The old dilemma would be inevitable; he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love Christ whom he hath not seen? A mind untouched by the agonies and wrongs which invest London hospitals and lanes with horror, could not be moved by the sufferings of a single individual, however holy, who

died eighteen centuries ago.

> "No; the essence of the belief is the belief in the Divinity of Christ. But accept that belief; think for a moment of all that implies, and you must admit that your Christianity becomes dogmatic in the highest degree. Our conceptions of the world and its meaning are more radically changed than our conceptions of the material universe, when the sun instead of the earth becomes its centre. *Every view of history, every theory of our duty, must be radically transformed by contact with that Stupendous Mystery.* Whether you accept or reject the special tenets of the Athanasian Creed is an infinitesimal trifle. You are bound to assume that every religion which does not take this dogma into account is without true vital force. Infidels, heathens, and Unitarians reject the single influence which alone can mould our lives in conformity with the everlasting laws of the universe. Of course, there are tricks of sleight of hand by which the conclusion is evaded. It would be too long and too trifling to attempt to expose them. Unsectarian Christianity consists in shirking the difficulty without meeting it, and trying hard to believe that the passion can survive without its essential basis. It proclaims the love of Christ as our motive, whilst it declines to make up its mind whether Christ was God or man; or endeavours to escape a categorical answer under a cloud of unsubstantial rhetoric. But the difference between man and God is infinite, and no effusion of superlatives will disguise the plain fact from honest minds. To be a Christian in any real sense you must start from a dogma of the most tremendous kind, and an undogmatic Creed is as senseless as a statue without shape or a picture without colour. Unsectarian means un-Christian."—From *Freethinking and Plainspeaking* (pp. 122-4), by Leslie Stephen. (Longmans, London.)

The considerations which seemed to compel the clearheaded author of this extract to his own well-known intellectual position no longer apply. In England, at any rate, the Church is not bound down to any mechanical theory of the inspiration of the Bible, and accepts all the discoveries of Modern Physical Science without misgiving. Such books as the late Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple) gave us in his Bampton Lectures have long ago shown the futility of attempting to map out the exact terms of a reconciliation between the claims of science and religion, but they have shown that religion and science are *not* destructive and contradictory of each other.

"The same principles are found in each. The principle of evolution, for instance, is as evident in the gradual development of religion as in the age-long process by which the natural world was created; the order and beauty and regular succession manifest in Nature can be traced also in the spiritual universe. The revelation which was formerly held to be violation of law is seen to be a revelation of higher law. The great postulate of science, the uniformity of Nature, is not infringed."

We know now that there are laws of the Universe which, if we knew more about them, would tell us how it was that a Virgin could conceive and bear a Son. It is not to us an inconceivable superstition that "The Son of Man" should have in His own person powers of which the rudimentary signs can be traced in all humanity, manifesting themselves from time to time. The day is long past when the resurrection of Jesus Christ can be set aside as a "cunningly devised fable." No scientific man, who has not deliberately shut himself in an hermetically sealed materialism would say to-day that "Miracles" do not happen. It is a question of evidence.

And educated men know that there is a science of metaphysics, that there is a science of psychology, that literary criticism is scientific, that the age of a document can be decided, that cumulative evidence cannot be ignored, and that simply to put aside the claims of Christianity without examination is absurd.

But, as Sir Leslie Stephen shows, it is the Christianity of the Catholic creed that matters, and it is this Christianity of which the man in the street has need. It gives him a solution of those social and ethical problems which he must solve, which he can only neglect at the peril of natural degradation. For example, the position of women depends upon our belief or disbelief that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. To say that monogamy is the natural evolution of humanity, that chastity in the young unmarried man is a product of civilization, that a high conception of a man's duty to posterity will keep him from harlotry, is simply to show ignorance of history, of human nature, and of the world as it is. A man who talks now-a-days about the respect of marriage being a Teutonic contribution to the evolution of civilized society, is behind the times. We *know* that respect for women, and marriage held in honour, are the creations of the Holy Catholic Church, which insists on the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the man in the street does not know these things. The discoveries in science, whether physical or psychical, do not reach him. Technical treatises are too strong meat for his intellectual digestion. The pulpit does not appeal to him. At every baptism in the Church of England the priest solemnly instructs the god-parents of the child, "Ye shall call upon him to hear sermons," but for the most part the admonition is in vain. As a matter of fact, he picks up his religious notions from the newspaper press. And the newspaper press is not now controlled by men who have a distinct and definite belief in Christianity. It depends upon Finance, and financiers have other interests. The assertion of the Psalter, "Notus in Judæa" has been changed now-a-days into an interrogation, and we ask, "In Jewry *is* God known?" Let any man who has an intimate acquaintance with the newspaper world run over in his mind the names of the great newspaper proprietors, the editors of our journalistic press, the writers of leading articles, the rising young journalists; and when he has excepted a few Irishmen, who may happen to remain faithful to the Roman Catholic Church, to which they owe their education, how many men will he find who honestly believe the Nicene Creed, and are habitually present on the first day of the week at the Breaking of the Bread?

The tone of the daily paper is tolerant. There is no rude hostility displayed towards definite Christian doctrines, but the toleration is politely contemptuous. "All wise men are of the same religion, and what that religion is wise men do not say."

It is true that in political matters the press has less power than it used to have. A magnate of finance cannot now seriously affect public opinion, though he may buy newspaper after newspaper, and sweep out the editorial staff to supply their places with men of his own choice. One wealthy wirepuller has other plutocrats to reckon with in questions of party politics, and a newspaper man who is dismissed by the proprietor of the *Tariff Reformer* may find another editorial chair placed at his disposal by the owner of *The Standard of Free Trade*.

The man in the street looks out for a newspaper which may strengthen his own party proclivities. He expects to find political questions discussed, but so far as religion is concerned he accepts without knowing it the current convention of the pressman, and imbibes a semi-sceptical atmosphere without misgiving or suspicion.

And yet, as Sir Leslie Stephen saw, every theory of duty depends upon Belief or Disbelief in the Divinity of Christ. We may talk of duty to Society, duty to the Race, duty to Posterity, duty to Civilization; but the plain man will recall the question of Sir Boyle Roche: “I do not understand, Mr. Speaker, all this talk about our duty to Posterity! What has Posterity ever done for us?”

You cannot control conduct by asserting that a man owes a debt to an abstraction which you vivify by printing it with a capital letter, and there remains always the question of the dying Lucretius—

> “Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well.”

The problem, then, which we have to solve is—how to arrest the attention of the average man to those Christian principles, of which the acceptance or definite refusal will determine the course of civilization during the next twenty years.

The mere assertion of authority will not suffice, and men are not impressed in favour of Catholic doctrine simply by dignified ceremony and Ritual. We have only to look across the English Channel to be assured of this. Frenchmen have not been encouraged to study the evidences of Christianity. Bishops and priests have only advertised sceptical books by forbidding their perusal to the faithful; and as the devout have been instructed to live by faith, but not how to give a reason for the faith which is in them, in the result M. Viviani’s atheistic rhetoric has been placarded at the cost of the State in every commune throughout France.

We may consider, then, if there be any method by which the man who does not read theological or scientific or philosophical books, the man who has left off going to church, or gets no help from the average sermon, the man who has no reverence for mere authority, may be induced to consider the Christian Revelation as offering him a key to those riddles of life which his civic responsibilities are perpetually propounding.

Remember that his present condition may be roughly described as consisting of religious haziness and moral laziness. The moral laziness is being subjected to a series of rough shocks. He *must* make up his mind about some questions of morality. The relation of the sexes, the duties of property, the treatment of the subject savage, the survival of the unfit, the ethics of commerce, the control of the sale of alcohol, the education of children, these things he has to decide and he will ultimately decide. But he is at present perplexed, and his religious haziness is the reason of his perplexity. He perhaps has not reached the conclusion of his contemporary in France, but he is on the way to it. Those heavenly lights which M. Viviani declares that his Government has extinguished still shine faintly for men in England, though the mists obscure them.

Can we get men to look upwards for light, and instead of cursing the ancient creed in a confused commination, to take Arthur Clough’s advice—

> “Ah! yet consider it again.”

I believe that there is a method, and as I mention it I am prepared for derision from all the “chorus of irresponsible reviewers, the irresponsible indolent reviewers.”

I believe that Fiction will find those that can be reached by no other means. Fiction sometimes sets a man seeking for Fact.

Very diffidently and very reverently I may remind my contemporaries that one, who has, at any rate, profoundly influenced the course of history, whatever view we may take of His person, did not disdain this method, “He taught them by parables.”

“Let me tell you a story.” Is there any age of mankind which does not respond to the invitation and give audience? A story stilled the tumult of the nursery in our earliest days, when heavy storms shook the windows and the tedium of a long, wet afternoon had turned play into fretfulness. A story beguiled us into interest when our History lesson had seemed an arid futility in Fourth Form days, and our magisterial enemies began to show themselves human after all when they bade us read *The Last of the Barons* as we were painfully plodding in the Plantagenet period, and found the War of the Roses a very thorny waste.

It is strange to turn over the pages of eminent evangelical sermons of the early Victorian days and to notice how “Novel reading” is denounced. Probably the worthy divines who fulminated against fiction were thinking of their own boyhood, and the mischief which came to them from Fielding and Richardson and Smollett surreptitiously perused. Sir Anthony Absolute’s detestation of the circulating library survived in some provincial circles even when Sir Walter Scott had come to his own. The last forty years have altered things considerably, and though some men may pretend to despise novels, now-a-days they must take them into account. Wise and learned persons began to prescribe them, not only as a vehicle for the exhibition of wholesome but unattractive information, but as having a remedial value of their own. “The intellectual anodyne of the nineteenth century,” I remember that somebody called them—perhaps it was Sir Arthur

Helps. It came about that those who had a secret and timid predilection for the story-book, but blushed a little if at Mudie's counter they ventured to ask for a novel, found that their ordinary reading of Biography and Memoirs revealed some unsuspected sympathies of the illustrious and wise. Who would have thought that Darwin devoured novels and Dean Church did not disdain them, and that Mr. Gladstone sat up all night to finish *John Inglesant*? The respectable pater-familias has long ceased to proscribe novel reading, and the most austere biographer no longer hides as a revelation of weakness his hero's literary divertisements. Finally, in this year of Grace 1906 we are boldly told that Archbishop Temple could stand an examination in Miss Yonge's novels, and on one occasion was heard keenly discussing with Lord Rosebery the careers of the May family in the *Daisy Chain* as though they were living acquaintances. From being recognized as a recreation the novel has developed into a power, and Charles Dickens was a pioneer in its progress. It is the custom amongst certain "superior persons" to sneer at the novel with a purpose, and to suggest that authors attained remunerative results by taking some subject which was already ripe for discussion and weaving round it a web of fiction.

Undoubtedly there is danger to-day of such artifice, but I maintain that the great reforms of the past century owed much to writers whose purpose was perfectly innocent. Cardinal Newman has told us of the literary influence of Sir Walter Scott, who turned men's minds in the direction of the Middle Ages.

"The general need," he said, "of something deeper and more attractive than what had offered itself elsewhere, may be said to have led to his popularity; and by means of his popularity he reacted on his readers, stimulating their mental thirst, feeding their hopes, setting before them visions, which when once seen are not easily forgotten, and silently indoctrinating them with nobler ideas, which might afterwards be appealed to as first principles."

If Cardinal Newman could thus maintain the value of Fiction in the great ecclesiastical movement which has regenerated the Church of England, I may claim without apology that the reform in Poor Law Administration gained the attention of the public when Dickens made "Bumbledom" ridiculous, and that the Court of Chancery was swept cleaner by the breezes which were blowing from *Bleak House*. Let any man run over in his mind the undoubted improvements in social matters during the last fifty years, and it will be seen how Fiction has assisted in their promotion. Did Charles Reade's *Hard Cash* do nothing to arouse the attention of the public to the condition of the insane? Did Sir Walter Besant's novels turn no light on the sins of the sweater, or Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke* show no reason for legalizing the Trade Union and the reform of the Law of Conspiracy? Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe may to-day be forgotten, but the southern states of North America would not dispute the influence of Fiction upon the public mind.

The fact is that men, who generally read nothing else but newspapers, will read a good novel, and if the book brings before them principles which they have hitherto neglected, they will very often consider those principles again. It is necessary, however, that the novel shall appeal to them as being a fair record of the present or the past. They may as they read it be unable to pronounce on the thesis which is at the back of the book, but they will be led to consider and discuss it if the story, as a story, holds them. And it is here that the story which has a genuine religious motive often fails. Most of the great artists in fiction, when they have taken in hand a subject which is of religious interest, have written in a spirit of detachment. George Eliot's *Romola* is an example, and the result is that men are more interested in Tito Melema than in Savonarola. Novels in which religion is necessarily much in evidence have been written either by literary artists who have studiously endeavoured to lay aside their own personal convictions, or if the books have been written with a distinctly religious purpose the hero and heroine have been unconvincing, the people in the story have not been alive.

When Cardinal Newman had abandoned prematurely his hope of maintaining the Catholic character of the Church of England, he did not disdain to employ his pen in the production of a novel with a religious purpose; but we are amazed to find that the exquisite grace of style which is one of the charms of the *Apologia* could not render Charles Riding interesting, or the novel *Loss and Gain*, of which he is the hero, readable.

It is perhaps dangerous to give another example from contemporary fiction, but those who justly admire Mrs. Humphry Ward's subtle discernment of character and great and increasing mastery of form and style, will not be inclined to dispute the opinion that when, in *Robert Elsmere*, she undertook the defence of the modern Unitarian position, her hero was hardly a "Man's man."

The reason is not far to seek. The average man knows too much of the darker side of life; and the necessary effort made by the author of religious novels to depict that of which they, fortunately for their own souls, have had no experience, is not successful. Charles Kingsley's undergraduate days were perhaps not without knowledge of the shadows, but he is happier in the Schools of Alexandria, or in the spacious days of Great Elizabeth, than in a tale of modern life such as *Two Years Ago*. His Broad Church Catholic teaching does not always find its way to the man in the street, and Henry Kingsley, whose life was so different from that of his illustrious clerical brother, has more of human interest in his stories.

The novel with a purpose, and especially with a religious purpose, fails only, when it does fail, because the author's knowledge of the average man in his sins and his temptations to sin, is altogether incommensurate with his familiarity with the great religious and social problems of which his story would suggest a solution.

It is often supposed that the men do not care to find the subject of religion introduced in fiction, that they resent religion in a novel, as children resent the administration of a medicinal powder in a spoonful of jam; but the expert witness of publishers demolishes this opinion. After all, the religious claim is insistent, and life is untruly depicted when men and women are described in a story as uninfluenced by it. There is something unreal in a book which has no Sundays in it. Critical opinion as expressed in the notices of books in the daily papers, and in more weighty reviews, is very misleading, simply because the reviewers are generally very

young men or women who know more or less of literature but very little of life. The wrath of the young man fresh from the University at the success of those books which do not ignore the spiritual needs of men and women amuses the experienced author.

“Faugh!” cries Mr. Jones of Balliol; “another batch of sin and sentiment!” “The Christian creed and the conjugal copula! Religion and Patchouli!” Yet the critic forgets that those who would reach the minds and hearts of men must deal with the problems of creed and character which men have to solve, each one for himself.

Our censors, dilettante, delicate-handed, with their canons of criticism might do worse than reckon up the number of English novels which have lived on into the twentieth century. They will be surprised to find that they are nearly all novels with a purpose and a religious purpose for their “motif.” Charles Reade when he wrote *Never too late to mend*, not only helped forward the humane and intelligent treatment of criminals, he showed how the Divine Image was stamped indelibly on human nature, and where it seemed to be obliterated could be restored. But Charles Reade drew real men and women. His characters are not puppets of the play-house but are alive. And Thackeray—*Clarum et venerabile nomen*—making hypocrites his quarry, and raining his quiver full of satiric shafts upon the hateful crew, never scoffed for a moment at reverent things, but with bowed head and hushed footsteps passed by the sanctuary. Therefore, these men are still living forces. Men will read other novels of the past as women look at old-fashion plates, and amuse themselves with the differences and contrasts of succeeding generations, but the novels which men buy in their hundreds of thousands, the novels which are reprinted again and again, the novels for which the publishers wait as their copyright is expiring, like heirs expecting a rich man’s death, that each may endeavour to be first in the field with an edition which pays no royalty to the author; these novels are those which truly represented life as it seemed in other days, life seeking ever to be reassured that One has come who offers to those who walk in darkness the light of life.

It is exasperating to some minds to discover that the man of the world is not altogether worldly, and that he finds in books which recognize religion as a considerable part of man’s life, something which gives to them reality and truth. Immature minds and inexperienced penmen are not impressed by the things which really matter, and in the interval between the University and man’s settlement in life much nonsense is written and spoken.

I speak from personal experience; and when I look back upon the reviews I wrote ten years ago, it is with invariable consternation, and sometimes a real sense of shame.

Nevertheless, there is some criticism of the religious novel which must be taken seriously. I have maintained that men generally in England are in a state of theological confusion, but that they are interested in religion if they can be induced to consider it. There is, as the great African Presbyter wrote seventeen hundred years ago, a natural response in the hearts of men to the chief articles of the Christian Faith. There is a *Testimonium animæ naturaliter christianæ*. But there are some who can only be described by a quotation: “They are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” They are determined that the Catholic creed shall have no place in the counsels and considerations of social legislation. Of Jesus Christ they have said, “We will not have this man to reign over us;” and if there be any chance that a man’s books may catch the eye of the public and rouse people to think whether opportunism is really statesmanship, and empiricism in politics really prudent, if, in a word, the principles of Christianity are offered as a solution of social problems, then the author is attacked on every side. It is suggested that his intention is insincere, that his knowledge is inadequate. The things which have been part of his painful discipline and development are described as his accepted environment. If a Bishop happens to find an illustration for a sermon in his pages, or a prominent Nonconformist divine recognizes that the laity like to read them, and says so; if any of those true hearts who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity have been ready to see that men who have been rescued *de profundis*, men who have had experience of [Greek: ta bathea tou satana] are not thereby disqualified for duty in the field of Faith; if, in a word, books which claim for Christianity the first place in the thought of the time are successful, a very malignant hostility is aroused.

It is most probable that this hatred of Christianity will grow and increase. The world has never before been as it is to-day. The system of party politics has placed power in the hands of the democracy. The “working man” has at last discovered what he can do. He must make his choice between the secular and the religious principle. Hitherto the Christian pastors of the people have appealed to his emotions, and not without success. The emotions will always be the chief guides in conduct for many; but the leaders of the working men are hard-headed, well read in social science and politics; and, owing to the insufficient training of the clergy in these subjects, the politicians of the *proletariat* have conceived a sort of contempt for the parson and the minister and the priest. The small body of Unitarians, wealthy from their constant intermarriage with the great Jewish families, and opposed to an aristocracy which has only in the last forty years been willing to receive them, has been quick to see that the working man must be alienated from the Catholic creed, and his vote secured at any cost. On the railway bookstalls we may note the activity of the Unitarian propaganda committee. Fifty years ago it was not necessary to consider the opinions of the man in the street: the Unitarian minister and his congregation were comfortable in the assurance of their own intellectual culture and their kindly interest for the poorer classes. In politics they were Liberals, for an Established Church interfered with their sense of superiority, and the landed proprietors and the hereditary aristocracy socially ignored them. But they had no notion of calling into existence an electorate which should endanger the supremacy of the capitalist, and, like Frankenstein, they are afraid of their own creations, now that the working man has become the dispenser of Parliamentary power. It is vital to their interests that he should be diverted from further attacks upon capital, and encouraged to believe that it is the priest who is his true foe. “*Le cléricalisme voilà l’ennemi*” is a convenient cry. A vague Deism is not dangerous to wealthy manufacturers; but if the clergy are going to take up Christian Socialism it is time to be up and doing. So every weapon against the creed of Christendom is being taken down and examined, and many an old fallacy is

refurbished and employed once more. Celsus is disinterred from the tomb in which Origen had buried him, and his filthy slander of the Blessed Virgin is printed as though it were a new discovery of historical research. Collins is called into court again as though Bentley had never exposed his ignorance, and Hume's *a priori* method is revived as though it had never been discredited; whilst Strauss and Renan are quoted as authorities, as if Westcott and Lightfoot had never been known. Shunt the working classes on a new line of rails. Set them shrieking against sacramentalists, and swearing at sacerdotalists, and we may quietly arrange our commercial combinations and protect our manufacturing interests!

I want to see the seats under the dome of St. Paul's filled not by only the middle-aged middle classes, who for the most part are Christian in creed, but by the young artisans and craftsmen, and the strong politicians who fill the Free Trade Hall in Manchester, and crowd the great Assembly Rooms of Birmingham and Liverpool when an election is drawing near. The timid members of the Episcopate who may be reminded that "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap," are not our only Bishops. Occasionally a Prime Minister offers for election and consecration a man who can reach the minds and consciences of men. Is it too great an ambition for a storyteller to try to arouse in people's minds a suspicion that after all something may be said for the Catholic Faith, and so to bring them to listen to those who know and can teach it? Each man must do his work with such tools as have come in his way. The Mission preacher will use his magnetic power, the artist whose skill it is to build or to paint, will make his appeal to the love of order and beauty, the musicians will meet the heart through the ear. May not the writer of fiction use his psychological training and his knowledge of many sides of human life to create a story which shall set men thinking about the old doctrines which he believes to have lost none of their regenerating power?

There is danger lest men with good intentions should go blindly to work to redress and diminish social grievances. Individualism with its hateful cry, "Each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," is now at a discount, but it may be replaced by a despotism of State regulation which will destroy the family and the home. There is, I believe, only one creed which can make the capitalist unselfish and the sons of labour satisfied, which will tell men that wealth means responsibility and that there is dignity in toil, which will teach the rich man to order himself lowly and reverently to those who are *his* betters and to hurt nobody by word or deed, which will teach the labourer that his chief need is not other men's wealth, but the "carrière ouverte aux talents" and the determination to do his duty in that state of life, whatever it may be, unto which God *shall* call him.

It is the Holy Catholic Faith which makes equality of opportunity for all men its earthly ambition, and offers refreshment and hope to those who are not strong enough to strive with the rest. The old men saw visions and we have found that they were prophecies, a young man may dream dreams. My dream is that the men who are doing the work of the world to-day may be taught that Christ is their best teacher and the Incarnate God their refuge and strength.

There is a tale of an acrobat and juggler who knew well that his tricks were the outcome of years of concentrated effort and constant exercise, and being moved by the Grace of God, he desired to offer the best thing he had to give to the Lord of Life. His best was his skill. He lived by it. Shown in the streets and the play places, it won for him his daily bread. His work was to give men amusement in their hours of recreation by an exhibition of his feats of strength and nimbleness. Could this, his one talent, be consecrated and devoted to God? So he considered, and humbly sought the sanctuary, and there before the Presence he performed his fantastic tricks which had cost him years of endeavour. The story is a parable which men have not been slow to read, and it has become the theme of the musician and artist.

Shall I offend my fellow-writers if I repeat it here in this connection?

THE FIRES OF MOLOCH

II

THE FIRES OF MOLOCH

"There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets."

Every three months with unfailing regularity small paragraphs appear in the daily papers headed "RECORD LOW BIRTH-RATE." Some figures follow, and then occurs the sentence—unhappily a stereotyped one in our day—"*This is the lowest rate recorded in any quarter since civil registration began.*"

Now and again a blue-book upon the subject of the birth-rate is dissected by a journalist and the result appears in his newspaper as a series of startling figures. The story of England's decadence is set out in the plainest language for every one to read.

At rarer intervals still, some prominent clergyman or sociologist writes or lectures in order to call attention to what is going on, and thus to bring home the spiritual and economic dangers of our racial suicide.

A few people read or listen and are convinced. A good many other people are too utterly ignorant of either the Philosophy of Christianity or the Science of Sociology to understand in the least what the point of view of the protesters is. According to their temperament, they smile quietly and dismiss the subject, or bellow their disgust at such a subject being mentioned at all.

> "He who far off beholds another dancing,
> And all the time
> Hears not the music that he dances to,
> Thinks him a madman."

A party which has the fools at its back is always in the majority, and discussion is stifled, alarm is lulled by the anodyne of indifference and the great number of honest folk who call themselves both Patriots and Christians have no time to spare from fighting and squabbling for money—in order that the dishonest men may not get it all.

Half-a-dozen problems of extreme national importance confront every thinking English man and woman in 1907. The air is thick with their stir and movement, and so great is the noise and reverberation of them that true "royalty" of "*inward* happiness" seems a thing impossible and past by in these troubled times. Be that as it may, it is quite certain that one of the most real and pressing of these problems is that summed up in the stock phrase "Record Low Birth-rate."

We hear a great deal about the doings of a class of people who are referred to as "The Smart Set," and it is actually said that its influence is having a serious effect upon the national character. I do not believe it for a moment. It seems a folly to suppose that a handful of champagne corks floating on a cess-pool has any far-reaching influence upon the English home. I mention that small section of society constituted by the idle and luxurious rich, because, whatever their vices are, they are being used as whipping-boy for enormous numbers of people whose lives are equally guilty with theirs in at least one regard—in the matter of which I am writing now.

I propose in this essay to discuss the question of the decline in the birth-rate from the Christian and Catholic standpoint. There is only one perfect philosophy, and all other half-true philosophies in the light of which we might consider such a momentous matter as this, lead only to the conclusion that expediency is the highest good. Without the incentive of the Christian Faith and without the light of the Incarnation one may sit in a corner and think till "all's blue in cloud cuckoo land." Christianity can alone be reconciled with Economics, theory and practice celebrating always the marriage of the King's son, the wedding of Heaven and Earth, the spiritual and the material. Plato knew that it was impossible to raise the Greek state to the level of his philosophic principles, and Aristotle frankly abandons the attempt to connect ethics and politics with the highest conclusions of his creed. We are in the same position to-day if we ignore the supreme truth which is our possession and which was not vouchsafed to the great Greek thinkers.

There is one cause and one cause only of the decline in the birth-rate and the beginning of the country's spiritual and material suicide.

The way of Nature is for every species to increase nearly to its possible maximum of numbers. This is a proved law, and nothing but the limitation of families by artificial means, or infanticide, can check its operation.

The truth is exactly as Dr. Barry put it nearly two years ago, "It stands confessed that the great, proud, English race, famous as a people for manly virtues, once the very Stoics of Christian Europe decline more and more to be fathers and mothers, will not be worried with children, and—cannot be spoken of in decent language."

It is a truth of history that when a nation begins to refuse the responsibility of providing for posterity it begins to decline.

The doctrines of Malthus in his great *Essay on the Principles of Population*, are no longer believed in by the Christian philosopher. Malthus was perfectly sound upon the ethical problem, and the "Neo-Malthusians," of whom I shall presently speak, have no right whatever to use his name upon their banners. Malthus, so the modern socialistic thinker, such as Mr. H. G. Wells avers, "demonstrated for all time that a State whose population continues to increase in obedience to unchecked instinct can progress only from bad to worse. From the point of view of human comfort and happiness the increase of population that occurs at each advance in human security is the greatest evil of life."

Malthus, however, never once suggested or advocated the limitation of population by mechanical means. He believed that it was a patriotic duty of men and women to *abstain from producing more children* than the State could bear, and it is as well to remove at once a popular misconception which stains the name of a good man and a powerful though mistaken thinker.

Otter says of him in a memoir, “His life was more than any other we have ever witnessed, a perpetual flow of enlightened benevolence, contentment and peace; it was the best and purest philosophy, brightened by Christian views and softened by Christian charity.”

It is economically and from the sociological point of view that the modern student condemns the theories of Malthus and those who follow him.

Socialist thinkers disregard the entity of nations, and treat of the world and its population as a whole. The Christian Patriot loves his own country, believes in its destiny no less than he reveres its past, and knows that if our English nation is going to live, it must go on reproducing itself.

The “no room to live” theory is preposterous upon the face of it. In 1879, Lord Derby asked a somewhat obvious question. “Surely,” he said, “it is better to have thirty-five millions of human beings leading useful and intelligent lives, rather than forty millions struggling painfully for a bare subsistence.”

This has been made into a watchword by those who advocate the limitation of population.

It can be answered by a simple statement of fact—in our colonies there are places for a hundred million wives.

While I have not lost sight of the main object of this paper—to summarize the weight of Catholic Christian feeling upon the *mechanical* limitation of population, and to tell how this is being accomplished—I find that there is yet some ground to be cleared before coming to the main issue.

I have said that there is only one material cause of our decadence, but there are many reasons.

More than a year ago in one or two newspapers, particularly the *Daily Chronicle*, various sociologists gave the results of their thought upon the matter. I print a few extracts here.

The outspoken Dr. Barry wrote:—

> .....”‘As for religion, Christian or any other, when its dogmas are no longer believed, its ethics pass away,’ and he draws a picture of the rotten state of society in our Western world, which he attributes directly to the growth of agnosticism. The fact that the birth-rate in England has been declining for twenty-five years, and was lowest in 1904, seems to Dr. Barry to be due to several causes—’poverty and luxury, pleasure-seeking and disbelief in the Bible,’ and he adds, ‘The spirit of anarchic individualism that cries, “No God, no Master!” is needed to tell us why Englishmen and their wives, once dedicated to a blameless and lasting union, have fallen into the pit which Malthus or his followers digged for them.’ England alone is not at fault. ‘Wherever unbelief has taken hold, or doubt saps the ancient creeds, there Malthus reigns instead of Christ.’”

A “well-known public man” wrote:—

> .....“It is within my knowledge that certain flats in Mayfair and elsewhere for the married servant and artisan class are let on the express or implied condition that not only no children shall be brought into the tenements, but that none shall be born there. The direct consequence of this embargo on natural increase is terribly disastrous. Many footmen and coachmen in Mayfair could tell a tragical story of the results of compulsory sterility.
>
> “A Japanese friend was telling me the other day that after an absence from England of a dozen years he is startled at the visible deterioration of the race and the great increase of penniless British weaklings, who add strength to no nation. ‘You English are losing both patriotism and religion, and consequently you are not only decadent but doomed, unless you mend your ways in the treatment of women and children.’”

I take the following from a leading article in the *Church Times*:—

> .....“After making all allowances for minor contributory causes, the fact remains and may be proved by a little inquiry, that married people have come to regard a large family as a curse instead of a Divine blessing. The birth-rates in London are instructive. Residential districts, with fewest poor, show the lowest rates. Hampstead 16·6 and Fulham 32·3 may be taken as typical districts at each end of the scale. Stepney with its Jewish population has a rate of 37. If the Aliens Bill is to be effective it will need a clause compelling Jews to limit their families, just as their Christian (!) neighbours do. The misery of it all is that we find the practice of child murder, for such it is in plain English, defended by men of education; lawyers, medical men, and even priests make no secret of their approval of it, if no more. And as working men become aware of what their ‘betters’ are saying and doing—and they are not slow to follow a similar course—the evil spreads. Our proper leaders, the Bishops, ought long ago to have dealt with this subject resolutely and firmly. But apparently a grain of incense is a more terrible thing to them than the murder of an existing if unborn personality. We can only judge by their public utterances, but we have yet to learn that as a body their lordships have spent a thousandth part of the time over this supreme question of national morality that they have devoted to the suppression of things disapproved of by Lady Wimborne and her league. The spectacle of disproportionate interest and action is melancholy, and indicative of incapacity to observe the real dangers to be faced.”

Again—

> "The personal causes of this mischief are fear of pain (*i. e.* failure to see in pain the discipline of God which elevates human nature), hatred of duty, shirking of responsibility, love of pleasure, the substitution of hedonism for the religion of Jesus Christ the Lord, and ignorance of the Holy Spirit as Lord of *all* life. How far religious teachers are accountable for this we leave to their own consciences to say. The same causes are at work in the high mortality of infants. The honour of doing her best for her child is cast aside by many a mother because it involves a certain amount of self-restraint and some seclusion from the gaieties of the hour; and recourse is had to all sorts of patent nostrums and infants' 'food' (often the cause of rickets) until the hospitals are over full of young children, whose sufferings are the result (God grant that they may be the atonement also) of their mothers' negligences and ignorances. Where there is not deliberate and wilful avoidance of maternal duty, there is neglect through awful ignorance."

In the *Daily Mail* Mr. H. G. Wells writes:—

> ....."On the other hand think of the discouragements. While the mother toils in a restricted anxious home amid her children, she sees through her imperfectly cleaned window (one can't do everything) the childless wives having a glorious time, going a-bicycling with their husbands, dressed gaudily with all his superfluous income, talking about their 'Rights.' As her children grow up to an age when they might help drudge with her or drudge for her, the State, without a word of thanks to her, takes them away to teach them and make good citizens of them. If the husband presently becomes bored by his restricted prolific household and its incessant demands, and absconds, or if he is simply unlucky and gets out of work, the State deals with her in a spirit of austere ingratitude. She is subjected to 'charity' and every conceivable indignity; she undergoes profounder humiliations than fall to the lot of the most dissolute women. If a husband 'goes wrong' and a woman has kept childless, she can get employment, she can shift for herself and be well quit of him, but a family disaster for a mother is catastrophe.
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> "I submit the situation is preposterous. I do not believe that with increasing intelligence and refinement women will go on marrying and bearing children under such conditions. I gather that the statistics of marriage-rates and birth-rates bear me out in this."

And in the *Daily Chronicle* the Rev. Cartmel-Robinson:—

> ....."This phenomenon of the falling birth-rate is of course not confined to England; it is to be met with, you might say generally, in all Christian countries. It would be far more marked but for the tremendous decline in the death-rate, especially among infants. We ourselves should be vitally bankrupt but for this factor, and in France, as you know, the population is slowly dropping. That is an old story, but it is startling to learn, as President Roosevelt tells us, that the native-born American population is actually declining.
>
> "One of the main causes, no doubt, is the determined pursuit of pleasure by all classes. The man will not take the burden of providing for a family, or, at any rate, a large family, upon himself, because that would mean a curtailment of his luxuries, perhaps even his necessities, while the woman refuses to spend all the prime of her life in child-bearing and child-rearing. She also wants to enjoy herself, and the pure, simple joys of maternity, which we used to think ought to be sufficient for a woman, have in many cases become irksome.
>
> "For my part I do not think that you will ever rouse England to this question of home and children by an appeal to patriotism. The Englishman has become too cosmopolitan for that, and I am afraid the feeling is growing.
>
> "The reason for the decline in America is said to be that women are becoming neurotic, and will not face the dangers and responsibilities of motherhood. No doubt that is true to a certain extent here also, and it is quite certain that among intellectual and highly-educated women, such as are trained at our universities in increasing numbers, the maternal instinct, the capacity for love, if you like to put it in that way, is apt to be destroyed.
>
> "Then, among the middle classes thousands of young women, who not many years ago would have looked to marriage as their natural career, are earning their own livings, and are less eager to rush into matrimony."

I have taken these extracts from the words of a few people crying in the wilderness. All of the dicta are at least eighteen months old. I am writing now, in November 1906, and three days ago the apparently inevitable paragraph again made its appearance:—

> "RECORD LOW BIRTH-RATE.
>
> "The births registered in England and Wales during the three months ended September 30—234,624, or 26·9 per 1,000 of the population—was the lowest rate recorded in any third quarter since civil registration was established.
>
> "The average in the same quarters of the past ten years was 28·8."

These opinions as to the reasons for the terrible decadence of England are doubtless all true. They are all contributory causes, and I do not think we can put a single one of them aside. Nothing could be more dismal or more hopeless reading. As one goes on, one experiences a sense as of a chill, deepening shadow.

Few people who read will be able to adopt the average man's attitude towards unpleasant and disturbing matters—to sidle by with a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders.

Where then do we stand?

So far I have endeavoured to show (*a*) the entire indifference of the ordinary man and woman to the fall in the birth-rate; (*b*) the only light, in which, as I understand it, one can see the problem as a whole—in the light of the Incarnation; (*c*) the fact that the Christian Sociologist to-day is inclined to condemn the theory that the limitation of population is necessary at all, even by legitimate methods of abstinence and control; (*d*) the varied reasons which, in the opinion of those who have studied the question deeply, contribute to the one central and shocking fact—

That incredible numbers of English men and women many of them professing themselves Christians, are constantly using methods to prevent the birth of children.

Every parish clergyman in England is perfectly aware of what is going on. Every Nonconformist minister, and indeed every one whose work brings him in touch with large masses of people in the capacities of leader, adviser, or friend, knows it also. Just as the figures of the Registrar General form a gauge by which to measure the generality of the malignant influence, so the personal experience of any man of the world will supply particular evidence of the state of things within his immediate purview and surroundings.

Always remembering that the evil is progressive, is hourly increasing, the observer of social phenomena at once asks himself if there is not some definite and organized control and direction of it. The desire to obtain the gratifications of passion while evading its responsibilities is, perhaps, the strongest feeling implanted in the fallen nature of mankind. This is sufficient to create a demand for knowledge of how to obtain the desired end, and the demand has in its turn created the supply.

There is a definite literature upon the subject, there is a large body of highly-trained and cultured men and women ready and anxious to disseminate the necessary information to produce these results.

I propose to deal briefly, in the first instance, with the literature which urges and explains practices which the laws of God, the laws of Nature, and the teachings of the Church utterly and emphatically condemn.

The people who call themselves "Malthusians" (and to avoid an injustice to the memory of Malthus I shall here style them Neo-Malthusians) have an organ of their own in the shape of a periodical which is the official voice of a league into which they have formed themselves. The periodical has, I believe, an extensive circulation, and it is published at the lowest possible price. Moreover, in each number of it which I have seen the following notice appears:—

> "The Secretary of the Malthusian League will be glad to send copies of back numbers of this journal to friends willing to distribute them for propagandist purposes."

We see that an ordered press campaign is in progress. This periodical is most ably written and edited. Signed articles appear in it by men and women of standing and position. I find it impossible to doubt for a moment that these economists and scientists are not absolutely sincere, and actuated by a high and laudable desire to benefit the world in which they live.

It is unnecessary to give the title of the periodical, but immediately beneath it the following sentence is printed in large letters—

"A CRUSADE AGAINST POVERTY."

Here is the *raison d'être* of the journal plainly stated, and so far it is no more than indicating the precise aim of Malthus—to find an economic remedy for the sufferings of poverty.

I proceed to give some examples of the teaching inculcated in the journal, and in the first place quote from a review of *L'Instinct d'Amour*, by Dr. Joanny Roux, a very distinguished French physician:—

> "Must all who refuse to procreate refrain from love? How easy it is to clothe one's self in the robes of social purity when replying to this question! The social purists tell the world that chastity is obligatory if procreation be not intended. It is impossible to carry out this view. The philosopher contents himself with studying sterile love and its consequences. He rejoices to think that thousands of infants are left out of the world who would have been doomed to suffer. The inconveniences resulting from some selfish people who refrain from parentage are as nothing in the balance when weighed against the horrors of indigence.
>
> "Should we not, by acting thus, lead to a progressive diminution of the population? Certainly; but that would be a good thing. As if, forsooth, human progress depended on quantity, and not on quality! Take China as an example of quantity without quality. Some writers seem to wish that the earth should be filled up with miserable and suffering people. Malthus, that gentle clergyman, in 1798, was the first to protest against such a view. Over-reproduction, he showed, was the cause of poverty. He, however, thought the only remedy for this was chastity, and was quite opposed to *sterile love*.
>
> "To accept sterile love, some say, is to run counter to Nature and natural morality. 'No,' says Dr. Roux, 'it is the preserving of these laws. In all cases where we construct houses or warm ourselves,

> we get one law of Nature to defend us against the other which injures us. We must not forget that our instincts are fixed customs of very ancient date; and there can be no doubt that man has the right to intervene in questions of that sexual instinct if morality (*i. e.* happiness) requires it of him.'"

When one reads these passages a flood of light as to the real influence and direction of such teachings comes to us at once. The writer, no doubt sincerely enough, assumes as an axiom of his whole position, that there is no law but "Nature," no morality but what he calls "Natural Morality." We are, in fact, under no obligations to anything but the promptings of animal instinct which are part of our human nature.

We see immediately the inherent negation of Christianity implied in this attitude, and apart from the definite teaching of the Faith upon the question, which I shall enter into later, it is most important that we should realize that the holders and preachers of Neo-Malthusianism must always be opposed to Christianity. Even those people who do not profess their hatred for, or disbelief in our Lord in so many words, logically imply them. Christians who may not have troubled themselves about this menace to the State and its morals must be told in no uncertain voice that the movement is purely heathen in its position and built upon a basis of heathenism. Let us call things by their right names, and realize that the Neo-Malthusian worshipping Nature and the Chinese Coolie worshipping his Joss are only two manifestations of exactly the same thing.

Nor are the people who are attempting to turn marriage into a polite and recognized form of prostitution always so reticent as to their attitude towards the Christian Faith. In an article which professes to sum up the work of the Malthusian League I read:—

> ....."The medical profession in England is still too much under the sway of the Church and conventional opinion to be able to discuss the population difficulty, except to censure those who are wise enough to follow science instead of theological traditions derived from the *juventus mundi*. Dr. Taylor, of Birmingham, who is said to be an ardent Churchman, in a presidential address to the Gynæcological Society, attacked the views of the Neo-Malthusians."

And again:—

> ....."We have to chronicle the prosecution of a new organ of the League, *Salud y Fuerza*, published in Barcelona, on account of an admirable article by Señor Leon Devaldez. Spain is the most retrograde of all our European nations; but the prosecution, we believe, will end in the defeat of the clerical party, as has been the case in England and in France. Science is destroying our traditional superstitions."

I feel sure that a great many people have not the slightest idea that not only is this detestable propaganda utterly incompatible with the profession of Christianity, but must logically be opposed to it.

Here is a case in point. The official organ of the Malthusian League quotes a letter from "a warmhearted clergyman," whose name is not given, in which he says:—

> "The theory of Neo-Malthusianism finds a way out of the difficulty. It is the use of preventive checks which, while they make possible to all married persons the gratification of their natural desires, will prevent the possibility of the ordinary results of such gratification following. 'This clergyman,' adds the editor, 'is one of the few who are fit to follow in the footsteps of Malthus, Whately, and Chalmers.'"

It is a not uninteresting speculation, which we may permit ourselves for a moment, as to the probable identity and character of this "clergyman." One hopes, of course, that he was not a clergyman, and that the editor of the journal, naturally unfamiliar with ecclesiastical affairs, gives the title to some minister of one of the Unitarian sects. But if the writer of the letter is really an ordained priest, then he must surely be either—

(1) An honest fool who means to do right, and does it as far as he knows how.

(2) A dishonest fool who means to do wrong, and does it.

(3) A fool who does whichever of the two he finds most convenient in this or that regard.

We need not, therefore, take the anonymous writer very seriously, but I quote him because the incident throws a side-light upon the psychology of the half Christian. It would be as unwise as it is unnecessary to quote freely from any of the Neo-Malthusian publications. My business in this essay is to make it quite clear to readers that there is a powerful and able organization which is constantly producing literature teaching the limitation of families. There are now six or seven "Malthusian Leagues" in existence, in England, Holland, Germany, France, Belgium, and Spain, and a Woman's International Branch uniting the women of these countries, while the printed matter issued by these organizations is enormous.

In the English journal to which I have been referring there are many advertisements of books and pamphlets in which the wording is undoubtedly designed to attract others than the earnest seeker after truth. I read, to give one example, that for eightpence post free I can obtain "*The Strike of a Sex*; or, Woman on Strike against the Male Sex for her 'Magna Charta.' One of the most advanced books ever published; intended to revolutionize public opinion on the relation of the sexes. Should be read by every person."

And lower down in the same column I am informed that the publishers of this sort of thing not only sell books advocating Neo-Malthusian practices, but are also willing to provide the means for committing them.

So much for the unsavoury products of the Neo-Malthusian press, products which would make the gentle old

clergyman of Haileybury turn away in loathing and disgust could he but see them. Large as the output of this pseudo-economic obscenity is, it does not reach a twentieth part of the people who are responsible for the decline of the birth-rate. They have derived their knowledge from another channel, from the instructions of the medical man or his lesser colleague the chemist.

The poorer classes who, a few years ago were ignorant of this propaganda, are now being instructed in it by the men from whom they buy their medicines. Doctors, in the majority of cases, are perfectly willing to explain to married people how they may avoid having children by means other than those of self-control. As a rule the medical man seems to have no conscience at all in this regard. His point of view is too often merely materialistic and concerned with nothing but physical function, and he has become in many cases, the active agent of the malignant forces which are sapping our national honour and prosperity. In discussing the question, more than one person has expressed his amazement at the readiness of doctors to explain and advocate the limitation of families. The doctors of England form one of the finest classes in the community. I will venture to say that very few men and women arrive at middle life without experiencing a lively feeling of gratitude, friendship, or even affection for some medical man. The devotion to his high calling, of even the average English doctor, is a fact in the lives of nearly all of us. It is the more surprising, and alarming also, when we realize, as inquirers are forced to realize, how wrong and mistaken the general attitude of the physician is towards this aspect of the sexual relations of men and women. It is said that infidelity is rife among those who are educated to cure our bodily ailments, that the agnostic habit of mind is frequent in this profession. I am not competent to judge of this, or to pronounce an opinion upon such a statement, though my own experience is directly opposed to it. But it is certain that until the last fifteen years the scientific temperament was disinclined to believe in anything it could not weigh, measure, analyze, touch, or see. Huxley, for example, was a striking instance of this position. But science has been revolutionized within the experience of one generation, and the “cock-sureness” has disappeared. We are all realizing that “unseen” simply means that which does not appeal to our sense of sight, or perhaps that which does not appeal to any of our senses. One of the most famous and honoured scientific men of to-day, Sir Oliver Lodge, says in regard to miracles, “I think we should hesitate very much before saying that they are impossible, because we do not know what may be the power of a great personality over natural forces.”

As the years go on, we may have great hopes that the regarding of psychology as just as much a necessary part of a doctor’s education as biology, or therapeutics will produce a better feeling among medical men in regard to the great question of which the statistics of the birth-rate form the gauge. Doctors will probably understand that harm done to the body and harm done to the soul react upon one another with remorseless certainty, and that there can be no real separation of spirit and matter. And directly this is understood we shall never find medical men recommending and assisting what Dr. Roux calls “sterile love” though some of us could find a very different name for it.

The layman unhesitatingly accepts the advice of his physician, and here “private judgment” hardly exists. If a priest tells a certain type of Englishman that Evening Communions spoil and maim our holiest sacrament, and are bad for the soul, he will resent it, and say that he will choose for himself in the matter. Yet if a doctor tells the same person that it is dangerous to eat mushrooms that have been gathered for more than two days, or that the irritation at his wrists is a symptom of uric acid in the blood, there will be no question of disbelief. The influence of doctors is incalculable, they rule us by our fear of death and our instinct of self-preservation, and rarely do we find that they abuse the trust reposed in them, or use their great power for ill always excepting the instance under discussion. When, therefore, the medical profession can be brought to see the preventive check system as it really is, when doctors understand that interference with natural laws induces a deterioration of character and temperament which eventually acts upon the body for its harm, and tends to race-degeneracy, then much will be gained. And when they progress still further in the coming reconciliation of science with the Christian Revelation, and own that the laws of God, set out and promulgated by His Holy Church, are no less binding than the laws made known by the revelation of science, then the battle will be half won. The final victory or defeat will be with the priests and ministers of every church and sect, the men who are the physicians of our souls.

The last few pages have been occupied with a statement of the Neo-Malthusian propaganda. I have been careful rather to understate than exaggerate the case. Much that I might have included, corroborative testimony from people who know, individual instances, letters, and so forth, has been rejected for the purposes of this essay. Were I writing another book upon the subject I should have used this material. In a collection of papers devoted to various subjects, and which will have a more general appeal than a work devoted entirely to vital statistics, it is impossible. But any one who has followed me thus far may be sure that I have been strictly temperate in statement.

We have seen what the Neo-Malthusians, avowed and secret, are doing. What is the Church doing to stem the evil? and what is the teaching of the Church upon the subject?

The teaching of the Church is perfectly clear; my contention is that it is so rarely taught as to be practically unknown to large masses of Christians.

No one ever goes to his parish priest and asks if adultery is wrong. Yet innumerable clergymen have told me that they are constantly asked by parishioners if there is “any harm” in the use of methods to limit families.

Such people are not, of course, of a very spiritual life, or very acute intelligence, or they would easily find the answer to such a question for themselves. But very few of us are either spiritually minded or of uncommon intelligence, and legislation must be for the average man. Voltaire said, “*on dit que Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons*,” and what was spoken as a sneer contains the germ of a great truth. Let me say once more, and I am certain of what I say, that the “*gros bataillons*” are quite ignorant of their moral obligations in marriage in so far as they relate to the question under discussion.

The truth is, in the first instance, very difficult to convey from the pulpit and to a mixed audience, though, to take three great names at random, the President of the United States, and our own Bishops of Ripon and London have spoken out. In accusing the clergy and nonconformist ministers of shirking their duty we must remember the enormous difficulty of their task. I have no responsibility but that of my own conviction, and no one is compelled to buy this book who does not wish to do so. It is therefore quite easy for me to sit in my study and write as I am doing. But the preacher, great as his opportunity and influence are, must by the nature of the case, be in a very different position. He is an official and recognized leader of his flock in spiritual affairs, a hundred considerations weigh with him; he is constrained on all sides by prejudice and convention which might do incalculable harm in other directions if the one was outraged and the other ignored. The position of the priest is admirably summed up in a pamphlet which Father Black has sent me. In it he explains that it is impossible for a preacher when addressing a general congregation to speak in other than general terms, or to say all that he may feel it is, in some cases, very desirable or even necessary to convey. He cannot but be aware that with sins of impurity especially, the very persons who commit them are generally of too delicate ears to endure to hear them called by their right names. This *sentimental* purity is not incompatible with corruption of life. He wishes to warn the innocent without enlightening their innocence, to lift the veil sufficiently to show their sin to the guilty, and yet to teach them by delicacy and not bring a railing accusation which would probably only harden instead of converting.

It is gravely necessary to realize how difficult the priest's task is, but at the same time it is extraordinary how little organized condemnation of the evil exists. No one can accurately measure or gauge the influence exercised by clergy in private conversations and admonitions, and this is doubtless considerable. But it is sporadic and not systematic, there is too much timidity and hesitation, and while the enemy is well organized and equipped we are without a plan of campaign and have no regular army in the field.

The Prayer-book, in the Marriage Service, tells us explicitly, "First it was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of His Holy Name." Here we have the voice of the Church speaking plainly enough, and both it and the authority of Scripture are unanimous in clear expression or unmistakable implication. The Christian attitude has been admirably summed up in Father Black's pamphlet, to which I acknowledged my indebtedness in the preface of my book *First it was Ordained*, and from which strong, lucid, and outspoken statement I quote a few sentences:—

> "Of this systematic wickedness, unfaithfulness is the natural consequence in many cases. Logically there is nothing but a sense of commercial honesty to keep a woman who has lost the reverence of marriage to one man. The obligation has no hold on her higher nature, and when passion or convenience press the balance there is no sufficient reason why she should be very scrupulous.
>
> "If women treat themselves, and are treated by their husbands as mere animals, all idea of chivalry is at an end; and this, no doubt, is in a measure the ground for a license of speech and action in even our public amusements, contrary not only to the *ethos* of Christianity, but to the principles of a civilization worthy of the name.
>
> "Women who interfere with the natural end of marriage—the bearing of children—are wives in name, in reality prostitutes. Men who require or encourage such acts are corrupters, not husbands. When I said in my sermon that trifling with God's laws of marriage was a horrible sin, I was thinking chiefly of the woman's side of the matter.
>
> "True manliness is, however, no less to be desired than true womanliness. In the words of Lord Tennyson—
>
> "'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,' the man should find in himself and display to his wife. Philosophy and religion are in accord here. St. John writes to young men, 'because ye are *strong* and have overcome the wicked one.' Professor Huxley, 'that man has had a liberal education who has been so trained that his body is the ready servant of his will; whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love all beauty and to hate all vileness, to respect others as himself.' To me that judgment seems a manly one which pronounces the corruption of a wife by a husband a viler thing than the gratification of lust in the common stews. This latter less deeply degrading to society or injurious to the nation at large.
>
> "But you and I, my dear sir, are Christians; and our concern is with Christian marriage. Here, as in everything else, the truth of Christ will deliver men from mistakes. Christian marriage in common with all other Christian things has in it the law of self-denial and self-conquest. Such is the Apostolic view of it; thus it is to be 'in the Lord,' and only 'in the Lord' is it permitted to the Christian.
>
> "Holy Scripture is of course everywhere clear as to the end of marriage, and God's condemnation express against the perversion of it, 'the Lord slew him.' St. Paul wills 'that women marry *and bear children*.'"

Is not this plain speaking? and could it be bettered as an expression of a militant Christian's hatred and horror of what is debasing and foul?—I think not. We are not all given the power of feeling the intense loathing for a very generally committed sin which is manifested here. A life in the world and of the world induces a tolerance which is very often laziness and cowardice. We are not to hate the sinner, of course, but only the sin, but which of us cares to inveigh against the vice of a friend? Savonarola was not a popular parson, though Santa Maria del Fiore was always crowded when he was in the pulpit. We ought to be

thankful for such bludgeon-sturdy words as these which show us the carrion-passions which war against the soul in their true light.

I know, you know, most men know, how extraordinarily easy it is to become familiar with our vices so that in a short time they become no vices at all, but just little pleasant failings which we share with some of the best fellows in the world. And all becomes dim and misty in the shadowy thoroughfares of thought, while it is only now and then—perhaps never at all—that some bugle-breeze blows over us and sounds *réveillée* to the sleeping soul.

If we are sensualists, though we don't realize it, we always live as though we were immortal; immortal in the sense that we shall never die and once more be born. Yet it is a strange truth in life that the man or woman who is converted to a clean life from sins of the body, has often more power than any one else to warn and exhort against sensuality. It is the man from whose eye the mote and beam has been removed who can speak most convincingly of the horrors of the dark. "Experto crede!" he calls out to mankind, and out of the uncleanness is brought forth meat. Let us see what Aurelius Augustinus—that old Father of the Church we call Saint Augustine—has to say of this danger and sin which we are considering. We all know what the Saint's early life was like, what was the life of a young man at a Pagan University in the fourth century. From his eighteenth year until he was thirty-two the Saint whom we revere lived in open vice at Carthage. On Easter Eve, April 387, he was baptized, and tradition tells us that then the massive harmony of the *Te Deum* was composed. No theologian has influenced the mind of Christendom more greatly than this man, not only by his writings, but by the spectacle we find in them of the fervour and devotion of his inner life. Remember that he knew all the bitter knowledge of lust, and hear how he writes of those who would prevent conception:—

> "Quia etsi non causa propagandæ prolis concumbitur, non tamen hujus libidinis causa propagationi prolis obsistitur sive voto malo, sive opere malo. Nam quid hoc faciunt quamvis vocentur conjuges, non sunt, nec ullam nuptiarum retinent veritatem, sed honestum nomen velandæ turpitudini obtendunt."

And of those who use drugs to prevent the birth of children, he further says:—

> "Aliquando eo usque pervenit hæc libidinosa crudelitas, vel libido crudelis, ut etiam sterilitatis venena procuret.
>
> "Prorsus si ambo tales sunt, conjuges non sunt, et si ab initio tales fuerunt, non sibi per connubium, sed per stuprum potius convenerunt. Si autem non ambo sunt tales audeo dicere aut illa est quodam mode meretrix mariti, aut ille adulter uxoris."

What is to be done? What is the duty of Christians, and how shall they combat this evil? Unless it is to spread and spread till every part of our natural life is infected, something must be done. The Neo-Malthusians are not only teaching married people how to avoid the responsibilities of marriage, but they are teaching unmarried people to do so as well. This is a fact which must not be lost sight of, as more than one clergyman has pointed out. If fear of consequences is removed chastity becomes more than ever threatened. If there is the wish and inclination to sin, and that wish is only not gratified because inconvenient results may lead to discovery, it is true that the moral value of people in such a case is small. But a general recognition of the fact that it is easy to sin will have incalculable influence for harm on those who are as yet on the border-line between the claims of self-gratification and control. Public sentiment becomes lax and unstrung. Simultaneously with the decline of the birth-rate the newspapers show every day that the old ideal, the sacred English ideal of the family is departing. Our greatest living novelist says openly, "Certainly one day the conditions of marriage will be changed. Marriage will be allowed for a certain period, say ten years." In many parts of America, where the President is ceaselessly urging his countrymen to denounce and give up Neo-Malthusian practices, the home has already disappeared. From a large collection of information and statistics I take only one example, quoted in a leading English newspaper. There is no need for a single word of comment, save that I do not vouch for the truth of the newspaper report which, in its very appearance, proves my point.

> "Mrs. Le Page, a New York lady who has just married her eighth husband, crystallizes her experience in life.
>
> "Five of her seven former husbands are still alive, and they have just sent messages of encouragement to the new incumbent. The other two have died.
>
> "Mrs. Le Page's maiden name was Mary Johnson, and she was the daughter of a Connecticut farmer. She was only fourteen, but well grown for her age, when she contracted a runaway marriage with a seventeen-year-old Danbury clerk named William Wakeman. In accordance with the American practice of hyphenating family names, she became Mrs. William Johnson-Wakeman. It was a happy marriage for three days, and then her family interfered, and the marriage was annulled.
>
> "Two years later, while in a New York elevated train, she made the acquaintance of Mr. Harry Saunders, a rich contractor's son and a commercial traveller. After two days' courtship she became Mrs. Henry Johnson-Wakeman-Saunders, and lived in perfect happiness, accompanying her husband on his travels for three years, until he died.
>
> "Shortly afterwards the lady married a railroad man, and was happy as Mrs. Joseph Johnson-Wakeman-Saunders-Powers, until he was killed in an accident. She next married a Jersey grocer,

but the bonds being severed in the Divorce Court, she married a hotel-keeper, becoming Mrs. John Johnson-Wakeman-Saunders-Powers-Lindley.

"Being once more disappointed, she was again freed by the Divorce Court, and continued her search for the ideal husband, whom she thought she had found when she became Mrs. Thomas Johnson-Wakeman-Saunders-Powers-Lindley-Godfrey. But John Godfrey compared unfavourably with his predecessors, and the Divorce Court restored her freedom. On the following day she became Mrs. Wilbury-Johnson-Wakeman-Saunders-Powers-Godfrey-Gay- (she says that the name too well described his character, as she shortly proved to the satisfaction of the Divorce Court) Crowther. This husband soon revealed his true character, and she had no difficulty in regaining her maiden liberty.

"Mrs. Benjamin (many hyphens) Le Page believes that her husband, who is English born, and has made considerable money in this country, is the long-sought ideal, but if he does not prove so—she is only thirty-nine, and there is still plenty of time to continue the search. She says that she had long wished to marry an Englishman, having been favourably impressed by what she had heard of their high qualities as husbands. She intends giving the experiment a thorough trial. So far, it has proved satisfactory, but she says that it is impossible to form a correct judgment of any man until she has been married for two or three weeks.

"Marriage, she says, is such a lottery, but it is the blessed state which it is ordained every woman shall occupy. Her life's mission is to find a pre-ordained mate, and she would not be deterred as many women, by a first failure, but should try and try again until successful.

"'My experience,' she says, 'is that women make a mistake in waiting for a man to do all the wooing. When I was young and inexperienced I fell into that error, and consequently I had several disappointments. But when I was thirty I realized that a woman's duty—well, right—was to do the wooing.'"

Again I ask what is to be done to influence public opinion, to rouse Christians in the same way that the National Conscience has been roused upon the Drink question?

An enormous amount of good can be done by the personal efforts and example of those in a position to influence others—pastors, doctors, Christian layworkers. Yet is it an impossible hope that some day a league or confraternity to fight the battle may be started? Are there no people of sufficient weight and importance in the world's eye to come forward and do this, no folk whose place will secure them a hearing, whose convictions will interest and convert others?

Eighteen months ago I published, in my book *First it was Ordained*, the sketch of an organized society on definite lines. In the course of the tale the founder of this league writes to an official in the Census Office who is alarmed at the decline of the birth-rate, and outlines the lines on which the society is to be started.

With some necessary elisions this is the letter:—

"You will see, therefore, that though there has been, and doubtless will continue to be, a great deal of windy talk on these matters, there is no organized body of men and women, no league, no union, either religious or political or both, which is devoted to dealing with the question, to rousing the national conscience and fighting the Neo-Malthusians tooth and nail.

"Wifehood—which generally means motherhood—is the predominant profession of women all over the world. The future of the world, and of course of any state in it, rests upon the quality and the quantity of its children. A prominent sociologist has just written, 'If the conditions under which the profession of motherhood is exercised are silly and rotten, our fleets, our armies, do no more than guard a thing that dies. In Great Britain, now, I think they are more or less silly and rotten.' Let us admit that this writer is correct. He does no more than voice conclusions at which even the most superficial student of the census returns must have arrived.

"What is to be done, then? How are we who are Christians and love our Lord, citizens who love our country, to fight the present conditions?

"That is what a band of people, including those I have mentioned, are discussing. They have arrived at a definite conclusion.

"A great league is to be formed of English men and women. Great names will be at the head of it, it is to be national. I have already pointed out to you that even the revelations of the census have not stirred the ordinary person. His patriotism has not been roused, and, you may be certain—as I am certain—that no question of national expediency on this point *will* stir the ordinary person, who is either indifferent or actually engaged in helping England's decadence by the restriction of his own family. A league started on the grounds of expediency and the common good alone would be an egregious failure.

"Utilitarianism never fired a great moral movement yet. It never will; because, before a man becomes a national utilitarian, he must get over *personal* utilitarianism. And in this case of the restriction of family, the degradation of marriage, *personal* utilitarianism is directly opposed to national welfare, and the personal wins.

"We must come back to the one Power and Force over the hearts and minds of men and women. We

must come back to religion.

"Here is the Church's great opportunity. There has never, perhaps, in the whole history of the Church in England been such a chance given to her. Our crusade must be a crusade made in the light of the Incarnation, under the auspices of God the Holy Ghost—*the Lord and Giver of Life*.

"Do you begin to see what I mean, what we hope for? The part of the Holy Spirit's work, which we recite in the Creed, has been largely forgotten. Lord and Giver of Life! We are about to revive the recognition and memory of the fact. We are going to use this cardinal point of Christian belief as our watchword and battle-cry.

"The gradual decline of literal belief in the Incarnation, the growth of a Protestantism which is on its way towards Unitarianism, the spread of Unitarian doctrines under other names, among the varied sects of dissent, have meant that an appalling disregard of life as the gift of God, its Author, has come among us. It is because you and I believe that Jesus was God as well as man that we insist upon the sacredness of human life.

"To-day, the loss of thousands of lives in a battle is printed as a piece of casual news. There is no particular sense of horror in the minds of any one. Murders are committed every day in momentary bursts of passion over trifles. Suicides increase, not only when some long-continued misery may seem to give a shadow of excuse, but when there has been some trivial disappointment. And so, leaving out a hundred other instances, one comes down to the truth of which every priest, every doctor, and every nurse is aware, the frustration of God's intention of childbirth—the reason for the terrible disclosures which you and your colleagues have given to the world in your census returns.

"Our league will be, therefore, a great *Church* League. We shall invite every English man and woman to join it, who believes that Christ was God. This is the only way in which we can make such a society do its work and accomplish its end. Directly we begin to allow the political altruist who has no definite belief in Christianity to join us, so surely our influence and opportunity will begin to decline. Compromise is no use whatever. We shall be bitterly assailed, and for a time we shall not seem to make much headway. I say *seem*, and for this reason: people who belong to us will not advertise their membership. The press, which is not interested, as a whole, in religious affairs, will not understand our aims, nor will it be—so I imagine—in sympathy with them. And any movement that has for its object, as this will have, the improvement of sexual morality, will be fought by the methods of ridicule and contempt. But this will be but surface, and in time the influence of our work will not only be felt, but seen. The wizards of figures will be at work once more."

Is this a dream and impracticable? It is for the great middle classes of England to answer during the coming years. The middle classes really rule. They do not command public opinion, but they do what is more than that—they persuade it. They represent more than the remaining classes the austerity and also the Christianity of the United Kingdom and the Dominions beyond the seas.

The question rests with them, and there are many who still hope and believe they will be faithful to their trust who are convinced—"Dabit Deus his quoque Finem."

THE HISTORICIDES OF OXFORD

III
THE HISTORICIDES OF OXFORD

"*Et quidquid Graecia mendax,*
Audet in historia."

Juvenal.

Sir Robert Walpole, who sometimes spoke with an eloquent crash that echoes in our ears to-day, once said, "Do not read history to me, for that, I know, must be false." Walpole may have read the *Scienza Nuova* of Vico probably in the French translation, and could hardly have failed to know something of Bossuet and Montesquieu. The result of his deliberations on the labours of contemporary historians is expressed thus, in a short, sudden bark of contempt.

Sir Robert made history, and did not dare to attempt the far more arduous task of writing it. When he gave it, his judgment had not so much value as it has to-day. Some of us read the limpid prose of Bossuet still, nor is the *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains* forgotten. Yet if at this moment a statesman were to repeat the opinion in reference to most of the history taught and written in Oxford, he would only be speaking the literal truth. The youth of a nation are Trustees for posterity, and it is to them in the first place, and to those who are responsible for their education in the second, that this paper is addressed.

I am aware that I am going to say some astonishing things, nor am I, under the sense of a strong conviction, confounding antipathy with duty. My words may fail to penetrate into the gloom of that temple where the fanatic priests of the inarticulate, inaccurate, and dull still sacrifice victims to the idols Freeman and Stubbs. But I have a reasonable expectation of a wider audience, and it lies in the hands of that audience, the undergraduate members of the University and their parents, to say if the present state of things shall continue. The Hebdomadal Council, Congregation and Convocation represent an insignificant minority. It is to the Pupil not the Tutor, to the Parent not the Fellow, to the Majority not to the Minority that I propose to speak.

It is axiomatic that no sum which the well-to-do undergraduate is prepared to pay could be too high for a perfect education and a learned environment. It is the fact that neither the one nor the other is provided, which deserves the attention, and should excite the alarm, of those who expect the former, the latter, or a combination of them both.

The poor man, to whom a good degree means a knife with which he will open the world’s oyster, suffers more greatly than the wealthier man. But both suffer, and both have a right to expect that in paying money for a genuine article they shall certainly obtain it.

The object of this essay, therefore, is to awaken the majority upon the whole matter, more especially that portion of the majority that designs to read history. The power lies in your hands. It is only by your acquiescence that the scandal continues, and it is the money of you and your parents which runs the machine. Once supplies are stopped, the present state of things will also stop with automatic suddenness. The art of history—for it is an art and not a science—will then revive in its full splendour, as the frescoes glow out upon the walls of an ancient church when the disfiguring whitewash is removed. The art of history will take its proper place and exercise its right function in the University, and the Historicides will remove their activities to a sphere in which they will be more appreciated. I believe that a University exists in Hayti....

I purpose a comprehensive summary of this question, and have spared no trouble to make the indictment as fair and accurate as I can. For a considerable period I have been steadily gathering data and forming opinions. Documents of importance and value have been furnished to me, and if something actual and conclusive does not result, then the fault is that of the writer, who has failed to deal adequately with the material which he has himself collected and with which he has been lavishly and generously supplied.

“Doest thou well to be angry?” was the question asked of the Hebrew prophet, who thereupon “went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.” And finally came the answer of Jonah, “I do well to be angry, even unto death.” My friends and I have built our modest place of espial, and we have our idea of what would become of the city were it left in the hands of certain rulers. That we do well to be angry I hope to show.

In the first place, it is really necessary to define history, and the duties of the historian. Until we have done this we have no standpoint. The axiom must always precede the syllogism just as the epithet concludes it. No one can build a basis in a vacuum. Innumerable minds have been at pains to define history.

From the remote time when Lucian published his treatise *How History ought to be Written* until the depressing moment when Bishop Stubbs first attempted to write it, there has been an enormous divergence of thought on this point. Kant believed that Dynasty and Nation, Emperor and Clown were alike incidents and puppets illustrating the theory that an irresistible, all-pervading Force works through history towards one end—the development of a perfect constitution. If Kant had written history and applied his method instead of indicating it, he would have had us believe that history is a science to be studied under the limiting influence of a rigid formula.

Ranke thought, and thought rightly, that the analysis of original documents alone made possible the synthesis of the past, while the trained historian in his endeavour to get at the truth should be chary of accepting contemporary authors, unless eye-witnesses of the events they chronicled. Yet Ranke definitely placed himself with those who were beginning to believe that history was a science and nothing more.

Guizot, who edited Gibbon, freshly defined the labours of the historian. Guizot’s view was that faithful research, *with its results duly applied, ought to enable the historian to supply such a picture of the past that it should be both to his readers and himself a veritable present*. I know of no more illuminating conception. But how can an historian supply the picture unless he has a competent knowledge of psychology? To write about human beings in the past without a knowledge of psychology is exactly like writing a history of locomotives without understanding anything whatever about the nature and properties of steam.

It is only quite lately that the scientists have allowed psychology to be a science, with, for example, as fixed a place and purpose as biology. If any one asked me for a list of authors from whom he would learn something of psychology I should probably commend to him Maher (1900), Spencer (1890), Stout (1899), James (1892), M’Cosh (1886), and so on.

You see the dates, do you not? You realize what every one who lives in the realm of thought, as also many

who work in the sphere of action, must realize? Briefly it is this. The old historians were concerned only with the simple results of investigation; the best modern historian adds to his equipment a knowledge of the processes of thought. The older sciences are joining hands with the new science of psychology. It is discerned that the individual temperament must clothe the bones of fact with the colour and movement that psychological knowledge alone can give.

It is discerned, but only by the important people as yet—only by the people who matter and count. The Oxford historians whom I am attacking have not realized it and will never realize it, which is the precise reason why we must reform them or give them the alternative of staffing the upper grade board schools.

James Anthony Froude did realize this certainty, and his works are not recommended to be read by candidates for history honours. The malignant personal hatred of Freeman, the stupidity of lesser men, long endeavoured to crush and limit the influence of the greatest historian, because the completest artist, who wrote history in our era. The endeavour to suppress him continues, but it is no longer anything but an endeavour. The times are changing very rapidly, and the triumphant war-whoops of some years ago have sunk to-day into the moribund whimpers of the discredited and deposed.

Everybody in Oxford is waking up to the fact that if history is to have unity of organism and purpose it must have artistic proportion and be informed by art. The leaven has been working for a long time, unobserved by the people it is destined to destroy at the moment of completed fermentation. It is always thus with revolutions. The period of gestation is lengthy and its processes are obscure. But the completed moment arrives, the goddess bursts in full armour from her sire, or Gargantua is born “crying not as other babes used to do, miez, miez, miez, miez, but with a high, sturdy, and big voice!”

The occasion that has set in motion forces which in no short time will destroy the little eminence of the Oxford Historicides, was the publication of Mr. Herbert Paul’s *Life of James Anthony Froude*. Everything had led up to that; I was cognizant of all the restlessness and disgust which were seething below the surface, and when at last the volume fell into Oxford with the noise and reverberation of a thunder-bolt, I was daily informed of the hideous consternation of those who realized that their day was over, that the judge was set and the doom begun, that no one could stay it.

I wish that I could write frankly and openly of the disturbance and alarm the book occasioned. If I were publishing this essay in the first instance in America I should certainly do so. However, as it will appear in England and afterwards in the Land of Freedom of Speech, this joy is not permitted to me. As Mr. H. G. Wells would say, “Figure that the bomb fell upon the green of All Souls’ while the clock in the gateway of Christ Church was in the act of striking twelve.”

The rush and hurry, the frightened consultations, the squeaks of those who realized that Nemesis was at hand at last and was beating at the door, were, I can assure the public that will read this paper, comparable to nothing so much as the occasion when the feet of the ferret are heard drumming down the hollow burrows of the warren, while the rabbits know the day of irresponsible frolic is over and that they must die in the dark or in the open, but must die.

The Historicides of Oxford have always feared an extended public and distrusted a name that has been made without their connivance, and which is beyond their reach. I find it difficult to suppose that those who do not realize the incredible narrowness and stupidity of a certain type of history don, will believe the anecdote I am about to tell. Nevertheless, it is true. A pedant, whose name I will not give, was recently heard to refer to Mr. Thomas Hardy in these words, “Hardy? Hardy? Oh, do you mean the little novelist man?”

Let me put it before you quite plainly and in antithesis. Hardly anything could better illustrate the appalling mental position of the *camarilla* that has got to go. Here is a priggish person, whom no one has ever heard of outside Oxford, piping out his contempt for a man who is generally recognized as one of the most distinguished novelists and one of the chief artists alive in our time.

It is possible that many people will not immediately appreciate the reason for all the terror excited by Mr. Paul’s biography. The outside man cannot quite know how Froude is, and always was, hated and feared by a certain section of the Oxford historians. They were always trying to hit him below the belt because he hit them above the intellect. There was a definite conspiracy among the malignant, from Freeman downwards, to lie about Froude in every conceivable way, and to complete their malicious impudence by calling Froude himself a liar. Froude was a master of English prose; the highest praise that can be given to the jargon which his detractors wrote, and write, is that it is not exactly Esperanto. Froude understood the colour of words, the movements of a paragraph, the harmonic rhythm of an emotion expressed in prose. His words were the incarnation of his original thought, theirs but accentuated their borrowings. While the genius of this great man was coming into its own, while it burned brightly and yet more bright, while all thoughtful England was beginning to be moved and stirred by a new force, and the possessor of it was living with intellects as great and gracious as his own, the Oxford historians slept in their padded rooms, and because they snored loudly imagined they were thinking. Too indolent to search for the truth, they contented themselves with dodging difficulties, and persuading each other that their ostentatious obscurity was fame.

There came a time at last when James Anthony Froude could no longer be ignored. His achievement was beginning to be a national possession, and he shared the councils of the rulers. The echoes of his fame reached the ears of the troglodytes, and, led by Freeman, they swarmed to the attack, yelping a pæan to mediocrity and brandishing weapons from a more than doubtful armoury.

Froude, as Mr. Paul has pointed out, “toiled for months and years over parchments and manuscripts often almost illegible, carefully noting the calligraphy, and among the authors of a joint composition assigning his

proper share to each. Freeman wrote his *History of the Norman Conquest*, upon which he was at this time engaged, entirely from books, without consulting a manuscript or original document of any kind."

Freeman,—the head of the daguerreotypical historians,—attacked a man whom he very well knew was his superior, pretending publicly to a greater knowledge of the special subject under discussion, and cynically denying any special knowledge in private. In public Freeman represented his hostile attitude as the natural outcome of his zeal for truth; in private it was known that he was actuated by personal hatred, and the discoveries made by Mr. J. B. Rye on the margins of Freeman's books in Owens College library have discredited him for all time. Again I quote from Mr. Paul's *Life of Froude*:—

> "Freeman's biographer, Dean Stephens, preserves absolute and unbroken silence on the duel between Freeman and Froude. I think the Dean's conduct was judicious. But there is no reason why a biographer of Froude should follow his example. On the contrary, it is absolutely essential that he should not; for Freeman's assiduous efforts, first in *The Saturday*, and afterwards in *The Contemporary Review*, did ultimately produce an impression, never yet fully dispelled, that Froude was an habitual garbler of facts and constitutionally reckless of the truth. But, before I come to details, let me say one word more about Freeman's qualifications for the task which he so lightly and eagerly undertook. Freeman, with all his self-assertion, was not incapable of candour. He was staunch in friendship, and spoke openly to his friends. To one of them, the excellent Dean Hook, famous for his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, he wrote, on the 27th of April, 1857, 'You have found me out about the sixteenth century. I fancy that from endlessly belabouring Froude, I get credit for knowing more of those times than I do. But one can belabour Froude on a very small amount of knowledge, and you are quite right when you say that I "have never thrown the whole force of my mind on that portion of history."' These words pour a flood of light on the temper and knowledge with which Freeman must have entered on what he really seemed to consider a crusade. His object was to belabour Froude. His own acquaintance with the subject was, as he says, 'very small,' but sufficient for enabling him to dispose satisfactorily of an historian who had spent years of patient toil in thorough and exhaustive research. On another occasion, also writing to Hook, whom he could not deceive, he said, 'I find I have a reputation with some people for knowing the sixteenth century, of which I am profoundly ignorant.' It does not appear to have struck him that he had done his best in *The Saturday Review* to make people think that, as Froude's critic, he deserved the reputation which he thus frankly and in private disclaims.
>
> "Another curious piece of evidence has come to light. After Freeman's death his library was transferred to Owens College, Manchester, and there, among his other books, is his copy of Froude's *History*. He once said himself, in reference to his criticism of Froude, 'In truth there is no kind of temper in the case, but only a strong sense of amusement in bowling down one thing after another.' Let us see. Here are some extracts from his marginal notes. 'A lie, *teste* Stubbs,' as if Stubbs were an authority, in the proper sense of the term, any more than Froude. Authorities are contemporary witnesses, or original documents. Another entry is 'Beast,' and yet another is 'Bah!' 'May I live to embowel James Anthony Froude,' is the pious aspiration with which he has adorned another page. 'Can Froude understand honesty?' asks this anxious inquirer; and again, 'Supposing Master Froude were set to break stones, feed pigs, or do anything else but write paradoxes, would he not curse his day?' Along with such graceful compliments as 'You've found that out since you wrote a book against your own father,' 'Give him as slave to Thirlwall,' there may be seen the culminating assertion, 'Froude is certainly the vilest brute that ever wrote a book.' Yet there was 'no kind of temper in the case,' and 'only a strong sense of amusement.' I suppose it must have amused Freeman to call another historian a vile brute. But it is fortunate that there was no temper in the case. For if there had, it would have been a very bad temper indeed."

Until Mr. Herbert Paul's *Life of Froude* appeared a year ago, the Historicides had been continually repeating the lie that Froude garbled documents, was untrustworthy, and wrote not history but fiction. History, of course, often imitates fiction, for good fiction always deals with realities. But these slanderers did not pause for a definition. They continued to abuse Froude, to prevent their pupils from reading him, and to refuse him a place in the recognized curriculum of historical study at the University.

From time to time a doubter or inquirer arose and was promptly suppressed. Nor was it likely that a man, whatever his private opinion of those in authority might be, was going to jeopardize his chance of a good degree by publishing it. There were awkward moments, of course, for the slanderers. A lie is like a forged promissory note. When it becomes due another must be forged in order to take up the first. But the Historicides had the whip-hand. They controlled the examinations, and they could do what they pleased.

I once wrote a little story which I will outline here, because I think it illustrates the method of these people whenever any ugly fact was discovered and some one required an explanation.

There was once a simple-minded old gentleman of a philosophic temper and an inquiring mind. Blessed with an ample fortune and untroubled by any business instincts, he devoted his life to the search for truth. On the whole his life was a happy one, because he possessed the faculty of going on. His failures were not made tragic with courage, but were minimized by persistence, and so were not very different from successes. Yet, as the years went on, he began to feel that in his time he would never achieve his end. Seeing him somewhat downcast, and becoming indifferent to his chop and Chambertin, his butler, a faithful person, came to him one day, and, after venturing a privileged remonstrance, stated that he had something to disclose. "I have lately heard, sir," said the butler, "that truth is really hidden at the bottom of a well. It may of course, sir, be mere idle talk, but I think, as far as I remember, we have not looked there yet? There was the church, sir—we found nothing there—and then I held the lantern for you in the chapel, too. There was none behind the art wall-paper, nor did Liberty have any in stock. And it wasn't in history, sir, because I turned over every leaf of

them Oxford books myself, and shook them well, too. You did think you'd found it in science, sir, I remember, there was something that you thought was truth in the bottom of the test-tube, but then you told me it wasn't, though I forget what you said it was after all."

"Merely a note of a recorded fact, Thomas," said the old gentleman sorrowfully. "But do you *really* think there is anything in this idea of yours?"

"I cannot be positive, sir," the butler replied; "but I see it stated definite at the end of a leading article in the *Artesian Engineer*."

"Have we a well on the premises, Thomas?" the old gentleman asked, putting on his spectacles and rubbing his hands briskly together.

"I asked the gardener this morning, sir," Thomas answered, "and he informs me that there is an old disused well by the cucumber-frame which could be opened easily enough by a couple of men working for a week."

"Engage some men at once," said the old gentleman, now thoroughly interested and pleased, and that day he enjoyed his chop with all his accustomed pleasure. The faithful butler, who had all his life lived worthily and well without truth, was overjoyed at the success of his suggestion. Anticipating, however, another disappointment, he gave private instructions, received *con amore* by the workmen, that they were not to hurry over their task of opening the well, and for a month the old gentleman's appetite whetted by hope, was all that his faithful retainer could desire.

At length the work was done, the well was fully opened, and the page-boy (an adventurous youth) descended in the bucket. There was a tense silence in the garden as the boy disappeared, until his hollow-sounding voice hailed them from below vibrating with excitement.

"I've got un, sir," ascended in a triumphant pipe; "he be here, sir, sure 'nuff!"

In a moment more the young fellow came to the surface, holding a large and speckled toad in his hand. On the back of the reptile an arrangement of orange-coloured spots spelt out the word TRUTH.

The old gentleman saw it, fell into uncontrollable rage, snatched the wondering reptile from the page-boy's hand and stamped out its life upon the ground.

"To the house all of you," he cried; "and never let me hear the name of truth again!" With that he forswore all his former theories, and in bitter irony started a society paper. However, the gardener, a wise, silent, and pawky person, came along later, and, picking a diamond from the crushed *débris* of the toad took it home and hid it away for the rest of his life, fearing discovery. When the gardener died, his relatives discovered the jewel, and knowing nothing of its value threw it away.

The old gentleman made an enormous fortune out of the society paper.

Forgive the digression. This, or something like it, was what the Historicides of Oxford did before the publication of Mr. Paul's book. Whenever any one showed them the truth they snatched it from him, and ordered him back into Stubbs's Charters.

I have already said something of the terror the *Life of Froude* excited. In a swift moment pretensions were exposed, lies were shown to be lies, and people began to read *Froude*. Mr. Paul made it quite plain that the accusations of dishonesty against Froude were utter fabrications. Mr. Paul, himself a learned historian, an artist and a man of letters, has gone into the charges *seriatim*, and triumphantly disproved them. No one can ever make them again. *They are lies, they have been proved once and for ever to be lies.* I cannot quote here the mass of refutation which has brought about the complete vindication of the accused historian. This is a summary and nothing more. It stands for all to read in Mr. Paul's book, a volume which should be in the hands of every man who is reading, and means to read history at Oxford.

This memorable book is a protest against the charlatanry of the pseudo-scientific school of history. The acts and intentions of people in the past cannot be known better than the intentions and acts of people in the present. No one man can possibly sift all, or anything like all the evidence for any period. Much of the important evidence is missing. No one can be examined or cross-examined, and for an historian to write as if he were a judge delivering a decision is a piece of impertinence. The abler man, assuming his honesty, will make the abler historian, and the mere bookworm is not the best judge of what probably happened. It is the dull and incompetent who formerly invented the fable that brilliant writers are superficial. This is the lie behind which the "dry as dusts" have lurked for years; it was their last line of defence, and Mr. Paul has destroyed it.

The historian must be able to write distinguished English, and he must understand the enormous possibilities of his medium. He must add a sense of artistry to his scholarship. He must be a man of experience in human event, a man who has done and suffered; must have been in crowds and seen "how madly men can care about nothings," and he must disabuse his mind of formula and theory before he begins to write. Sir Arthur Helps said this years ago:—

"To make themselves historians, they should also have considered the combinations among men and the laws that govern such things; for there are laws. Moreover our historians, like most men who do great things, must combine in themselves qualities which are held to belong to opposite natures; must at the same time be patient in research and *vigorous in imagination*, energetic and calm, cautious and enterprising."

History, in short, is the complement of poetry, and with this definition as a basis let us proceed to examine some of the Oxford historians of to-day. But first let me recapitulate the points at which we have so far arrived.

I have endeavoured to make plain, that—

(*a*) The Oxford historians of the moment enjoy an unjust monopoly, and exercise a disastrous power of veto.

(*b*) That the *power* to stop all this, to force these people to their duty or to send them about their business lies with the majority.

(*c*) That the majority is composed of those who pay for the education of their sons, and of those who proceed to the University for an education.

(*d*) That the historian must be not only a scholar, but an artist and man of letters also.

(*e*) That the fear of Froude provoked the attack on him in the past, and has maintained it until a year ago.

(*f*) That Mr. Paul's *Life of Froude* has silenced the misstatements of mediocrity and incompetence for ever.

The whole business of Froude has provided one with a lens in which to focus the question upon the page, and no one was ever provided with a better text than I have been. Excuse me, however, if I make a brief personal explanation. While engaged upon this piece of work an Oxford man, an old-fashioned High Churchman of the Freeman type, has been staying with me. It is forty years since he was in residence, and he did not see with me at all in this matter when we discussed it.

"I cannot understand," he said, "how you are going to champion Froude and Mr. Paul against Freeman, who was perfectly sound on Church matters, as I believe you to be. All you have ever published has been in support of Catholic Truth, and yet you are earnestly advocating a historian who was the incarnation of Protestantism."

It was, in the first place, difficult to make my interlocutor see that I was writing of the art of the historian, and not the trend of his opinions. In the second place, I do not agree with him as to the essential Protestantism of Froude. Froude's religious attitude has been summed up once and for all by one of the most brilliant writers of our time, an historian, artist, and scholar, whom Oxford dons rejected, but for whom Oxford calls aloud, and for whom St. Stephen's has naturally a greater attraction—much as one deplores it.

Mr. Belloc writes:—

> "See how definite, how downright, and how clean are the sentences in which Froude asserts that Christianity is Catholic or nothing:—
>
> "'... This was the body of death which philosophy detected but could not explain, and from which *Catholicism* now came forward with its magnificent promise of deliverance.
>
> "'The carnal doctrine of the sacraments, which they are compelled to acknowledge to have been taught as fully in the early Church as it is now taught by the Roman Catholics, has long been the stumbling-block to Protestants. It was the very essence of Christianity itself. Unless the body could be purified, the soul could not be saved; or, rather, as from the beginning, soul and flesh were one man and inseparable, without his flesh, man was lost, or would cease to be. But the natural organization of the flesh was infected, and unless organization could begin again from a new original, no pure material substance could exist at all. He, therefore, by whom God had first made the world, entered into the womb of the Virgin in the form (so to speak) of a new organic cell, and around it, through the virtue of His creative energy, a material body grew again of the substance of His mother, pure of taint and clean as the first body of the first man when it passed out under His hand in the beginning of all things.'
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> "Throughout his essay on the Philosophy of Christianity, where he was maintaining a thesis odious to the majority of his readers, he rings as hard as ever. The philosophy of Christianity is frankly declared to be Catholicism and Catholicism alone; the truth of Christianity is denied. It is called a thing 'worn and old' even in Luther's time, and he definitely prophesies a period when 'our posterity' shall learn to 'despise the miserable fabric which Luther stitched together out of its tatters.'"

I can add nothing to Mr. Belloc's criticism or his quotations.

Let us now take a survey of the history which the powers that be in Oxford have substituted for the work of Froude. Let us shake the upas-trees which shadow the quadrangle of the Schools and wonder how these astonishing vegetables have managed to produce such fruit as that of which I have to set samples before you.

The Examination Statutes in the section containing the regulations for the Honour School of Modern History recommend, among other books, that candidates who take the period 1559-1715 should study *Gustavus Adolphus*, by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher, M.A., late Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford. The gentlemen who compile the Examination Statutes would "recommend" almost anything, but I imagine that I am about to astonish the general reader.

I will begin with Mr. Fletcher's preface. He himself says in the very first line that his book "demands little preface." It would have been perhaps better for him had he been guided by his own pious opinion and

resisted the temptation to print his confessions in nine closely-printed pages. I say “confessions” advisedly, for rarely in the course of a wide experience of books have I set eyes upon a more candid and almost disarming statement than the one before me here.

In his preface Mr. Fletcher asserts that his book—

(1) “Makes no pretensions to be based upon original research,” and he follows up this curious admission with ...

(2) “And I cannot claim to have read even all the modern authorities on the subject.”

And (3) “My knowledge of the Swedish language is by no means independent of the assistance of a dictionary, nor can I hope to have escaped that tendency to partiality for which the natural fascination of such a subject is the only excuse.”

Mr. Fletcher then proceeds to tell us that he was

(4) “Obliged to include accounts of many things of which I had made no special study. The military history of the Thirty Years’ War is in itself a case in point. No satisfactory monograph on the subject exists, and I have often been obliged to confess myself at fault in grasping the exact meaning of military terms, and the exact effect of manœuvres, in an art of which even in its modern shape I know nothing.

(5) “But the times have so far changed,” he continues, “that I am able to plead that I am probably not much more ignorant of the art of war than the majority of my readers are likely to be.

(6) “In those archives” (the archives of Stockholm), “if anywhere, it is probable that the true Gustavus Adolphus is to be found.” But

(7) He, Mr. Fletcher, “is a man who has no pretension to be a student of archives.”

Here, then, we have an historian who admits that even the little he has to offer is borrowed from the books of other people. He has not taken the trouble to search and inquire for himself, and, content with profiting by the labours of others more conscientious, he has of course been unable to verify the accuracy of such labours. Nor has he even taken the trouble to borrow from the latest sources, for he informs us, “*and I cannot claim to have read even all the modern authorities on the subject*.”

Mr. Fletcher does not thoroughly know the language of the country of which he writes; he has included accounts of many things “of which I had made no special study” in this precious book; and finally, the historian of the Victor of Breitenfeld and Lützen knows absolutely nothing of military history, the art of war, or the meaning of military terms, in spite of which, at page 119, he declares (*a*) that Gustavus was “certainly a greater master of tactics than Wallenstein,” but “not a greater cavalry captain than Pappenheim;” and (*b*) “that Pappenheim had not the *coup d’œil* which enables a man to grasp a whole battle at once.”

How a man can dare to print such a cataract of admissions I do not understand. At any rate, tested by the lowest standard, treated with the utmost leniency, his book stands self-confessed as worthless. However modest the author’s estimate of his work and the humility of Heep was as nothing to the assumption of this preface, the book *cannot* under any conceivable circumstances be of the least use to the student. It outrages every canon by which the most amateur of historians should guide himself to write.

Yet this book is recommended in the Examination Statutes to be read by men wishing to take Honours in History while the works of James Anthony Froude are rigidly excluded.

I would fain linger a little longer with Mr. Fletcher, possibly one of the richest unconscious humourists who have ever written history. He deserves to be known to a wider circle than the mere academic. In these drab, hurried days, anything that makes for innocent gaiety is to be welcomed. I think it was Ruskin who said that Edwin Lear’s *Book of Nonsense* was one of the most valuable books ever written. It is a pity that Mr. Ruskin did not live to read Mr. Fletcher’s other work, *An Introductory History of England*.

Gustavus Adolphus was published in 1900, and Mr. Fletcher was then described as “Late Fellow of All Souls’ College.” The later and more mature work was published in 1904, and we then see Mr. Fletcher as a Fellow of Magdalen.

In *An Introductory History of England* we have, of course, the usual preface, from which I wish I had space to quote largely. I have not, but in turning the leaves, the eye at once falls on another apologia:—

“I have no pretensions to be a scholar in the original document sense;” and, “I fear it will be very easy for those who are such scholars to find many mistakes in detail, as well as to question my conclusions.”

Further, he speaks of the Honour School of Modern History in language which I, for one, heartily endorse. “I do not consider,” he says (p. vi.), “that the immense growth of the History School at Oxford ... is at all a healthy sign for English education.”

I do not intend to do more than give one specimen of Mr. Fletcher’s style in this book, though I have read the whole of it with pleasure and amusement. The paragraph I am about to quote should live in the annals of the Oxford Historicides for ever. I imagine that in writing it, Mr. Fletcher had been slyly reading *Oceana* in secret, and longed to emulate the vividness of that august prose. The volume of Froude was obviously out of the way when the purple passage was produced, but if it loses in style owing to this circumstance, it gains in interest as the unconnected revelation of a truly extraordinary mind.

“As the ice-sheet advanced, the wild animals gradually moved southwards; the primitive Briton, unhindered by English Channel or Mediterranean Sea, walked after the mammoth and the hippopotamus, shooting at them with wooden arrows tipped with flints. And the grizzly bear and the sabre-toothed tiger walked after the primitive Briton.”

We must bid farewell to Mr. Fletcher, the historian preferred to Froude by certain people! I do not wish to give pain to any one in the world, much less to one who has given me so much pleasure. But even at the cost of that, I would ask gentlemen who are reading history at Oxford, and gentlemen who are sending their sons to read history at Oxford, to pause and reflect before they entrust grave interests and momentous personal issues to the mercies of such writers as Mr. Fletcher, to the direction of the historian *manqué*.

Let us leave the *mala gaudia mentis* provided by Mr. Fletcher, and proceed to more considerable men.

In his case we have a person, though ill-equipped by nature or temperament, engaged in an honest endeavour to write with vigour and picturesqueness. Grotesque as it may seem to us, the “Primitive Briton walking after the hippopotamus, and the sabre-toothed tiger walking after the primitive Briton” shows a genuine attempt at style. It is from the rude carvings of savage races that the Venus of Milo has been evolved, and from the mural decoration of the cave-dwellers has the perfected art of Velasquez or Murillo come.

There are, however, other writers in Oxford to-day who merely chronicle facts. This is not writing history, of course, but a careful chronicle of *accurate* fact is certainly valuable to the student, and may serve as a ladder by which he may mount into the realms of true history. Some one must do the spade work, dull and uninteresting as it may be, and all we ask of the gardener’s labourer is that his toil should be accomplished thoroughly and well.

One of the books that is put into the hands of history students at Oxford as a useful work of reference is *European History* 470-1871, by Mr. Arthur Hassall, a student and tutor of Christ Church, Oxford. Let me here explain for the general public that “a Student” of Christ Church is in the same position as the “Fellow” of another college.

The book at first sight does certainly seem to supply a need. It is a chronicle, in parallel columns, of the events which occurred in every country between the dates named. A man who is preparing an essay for his tutor might well be at a momentary loss for a date. “What was the exact year in which so-and-so succeeded, or the battle of such-and-such a place occurred?” he might ask himself, and turn to Mr. Hassall’s book for answers.

Let us take a particular instance. When was Napoleon III. proclaimed Emperor? According to Mr. Hassall he was proclaimed twice; in 1852 and again in 1853. Under *1852* I read: “The French nation, by a large majority, sanction the restoration of the Empire (November), and Napoleon is proclaimed Emperor (December 2).” Lower down, on the same page, under *1853*, I am told that “Napoleon consults the people on the subject of the restoration of the Empire, and secures a large majority in its favour (November 21).... Napoleon is declared Emperor of the French as Napoleon III. (December 2).”

The right date is 1852. These strange contradictions occur in the second as well as the first edition of Mr. Hassall’s book, for which minute accuracy is the only *raison d’être*.

Another “handbook,” this time purporting to be an outline of the *Political History of England*, and much in use by the long-suffering student of to-day is published by the Right Honourable Arthur H. Dyke Acland, M.P., and Cyril Ransome, M.A., Merton College, Oxford. This book also makes no pretensions to style and any one who buys it has a right to require that its statements should be minutely accurate. Nevertheless, in it I find the following conflicting statements. “1792, April 23. Warren Hastings is acquitted,” and “1795, Acquittal of Warren Hastings.” Which is right? A later edition of the handbook tells me that 1795 is. Yet it is odd, to say the least of it, that in the seventh edition the wrong date was impressed on the student by the words, “Warren Hastings is acquitted” being printed in larger type than they were under 1795.

I am not going to multiply instances of this sort of thing. When it is necessary to produce a completer indictment of the pseudo-scientific historians I am able to assure them that it will be done. A great awakening has come to the University, and a hundred keen, hostile eyes are focussed upon its chief anachronism. There are many men in Oxford to-day who can say in their hearts: “So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar and bring it down to the ground.”

I will pass at once to Professor Oman, Commander-in-Chief of retrograde Dondom.

Much of what Oxford has to bestow of honour and distinction Professor Oman has received. Some of the rewards of the greatest University have been his. He may be called the leader of the pseudo-scientific school now publishing, and in the past has enjoyed such eminence as this confers, among a corporation whose members are not so famous for the books they have written as for the books they ought not to have written.

Professor Oman, in his *Inaugural Lecture on the Study of History* (1906) said: “I am indignant at all the cheap satire levelled against the college tutorial system, the curriculum of the schools, the examinations and their results, which forms the staple of the irresponsible criticisms of the daily, weekly, or monthly press, of the pamphlets of a man with a grievance, and of the harangues delivered when educationalists (horrid word) assemble in conclave.”

I can well understand it. Three months before this lecture was given, I remember reading an article in the *Army Service Corps Quarterly*, certainly neither irresponsible nor cheap, though composed by two writers whose grievance was the inaccuracy of the Chichele Professor.

“Napoleon was so profoundly ignorant of the character of the (‘Spanish’) nation that he imagined,” wrote the Professor in his *History of the Peninsular War*, “that a few high-sounding proclamations and promises of liberal reforms would induce them to accept from his hands any new sovereign whom he chose to nominate.”

At the date when Napoleon is supposed by the Professor to have been behaving like a Professor, not of war but of history, he was writing to Murat (May 16, 1808): “Je vous recommande de prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires pour donner du mouvement dans l’arsenal. *Ce sont là les meilleures proclamations pour se concilier l’affection des peuples.*” Three days before (May 13), he had warned Murat not to “flatter the Spaniards too much.... I have,” he wrote, “more experience of the Spaniards than you. When you told me that Madrid was very tranquil, I said to every one that you would soon have an insurrection.”

The article referred to utterly contradicts this statement of Professor Oman’s. Hundreds of original documents were examined, and the point was proved with entire brilliance and clarity. The pamphlet is quite unanswerable, and has never been answered. The quotation from the Professor’s lecture illustrates the temper and attitude of the typical unprogressive. Why all criticism of the Professor and his friends should be cheap and irresponsible I do not know. When Mr. Herbert Paul writes of Stubbs’s *Constitutional History of England*—the Bible of the pseudo-historians—that it “may be a useful book for students. Unless or until it is rewritten, it can have no existence for the general reader,” and “a novice whose mind is a blank may read whole chapters of Gardiner without discovering that any events of much significance happened in the seventeenth century” is Mr. Paul irresponsible and cheap? Mr. Paul obtained the highest honour possible in his degree examination; he was a member of Parliament for South Edinburgh, one of the most cultured constituencies in the kingdom; he is a member of the present Parliament. As historians, indeed, the relative positions of Mr. Paul and Mr. Oman, are those of banker and pawnbroker respectively.

This publicly expressed irritation of the Chichele Professor is symptomatic.

When Froude gave *his* inaugural lecture Mr. Oman was present, and was, he tells us—

...“carried away at the moment by his eloquent plea in favour of the view that history must be written as literature, that it is the historian’s duty to present his work in a shape that will be clearly comprehensible to as many readers as possible, that dull, pedantic, over-technical diction is an absolute crime, since by it possible converts to the cause of history may be turned back and estranged.”

Mr. Oman was not carried away very far. The works of the man who was genius and moralist, man of letters and historian, are still excluded from the “curriculum,” while the works of the Professor who was temporarily carried away are still included in it.

It is, indeed, perfectly true, as Mr. Oman very candidly admits, that “even five years spent as a Deputy-Professor have not eradicated the old tutorial virus from his system.” He suffers, and I suppose must always suffer, from the inability to write his history so that it is a pleasure to read it. The literary instinct is wanting, the artistic temperament is absent, and like all those writers of whom he is the most able and the chief, the Chichele Professor can repeat but can neither create nor recreate.

On the very page where I read “educationalists” (horrid word), I also read these melodious and polished sentences “equipped with a severely specialistic curriculum.” *Quip! lis! tic! ric!* how horribly these words jar and offend, what a barbarous jargon is this!

Again, “they hope to find this one rather less rebarbative than Law or Mathematics.” From what sewer of language did the writer drag “rebarbative” to grace his prose?

It is the same with everything this gentleman writes, or to be exact, in everything I have read of his.

He speaks of Cæsar’s “chequered and oragious political career.”

He tells us of himself, “I was one of those exceptionals.” You have only to open any single page of any single book Professor Oman has written to realize that he either knows nothing of or cares nothing at all for the art of writing prose. I admit that it is easy enough to find, and print, faults in the writings of any one, even, here and there, in the work of a Master. I was re-reading *Oceana* the other day, and noticed that Froude has written, “there was no undergrowth, no rocks or stones, only fresh green grass.” ... But an error such as this is exactly like a musical discord, inadmissible in the exercise of a student of harmony, but as nothing in the composition of a Master.

I do not wish to say whether, in my opinion, Professor Oman’s views of history are generally sound or if they are not. He would not be where he is, I suppose, were he not credible and generally accurate. But what I do know, and what I have a right to say, is that his prose is turgid, clumsy and without flexibility. He can only tell us that something has happened, he cannot make that happening live and pulse within the brain. He is without the first quality of the true historian, the knowledge and mastery of the medium in which he expresses his thoughts, and lacking all kinetic power he does not even know of what wood to make a crutch.

Mr. Oman and all his school are the legitimate descendants of their Master, Stubbs—the Great Cham of the Historicides. It is a mournful fact that the incredibly vicious style of William Stubbs has had a most malign influence over that of lesser men.

The samples of it that I give here will amaze those people who have not read the learned Bishop, and who have been in the habit of regarding him as a literary man as well as a historian.

“The steam plough,” Stubbs writes at p. 636, vol. iii. of *The Constitutional History of England*, “and the sewing machine are less picturesque, and call for a less educated eye than that of the plough-man and the seamstress, but they produce more work with less waste of energy; they give more leisure and greater comfort; they call out, in the production and improvement of their mechanism, a higher and more widespread culture. And all these things are growing instead of decaying.” With what is the historian comparing the steam plough and sewing machine? And does a sewing machine “call out” a higher *culture*? and do the things that are “growing instead of decaying” include a steam plough?

We are also told on page 634, that religion ... “has sunk on the one hand into a dogma fenced about with walls which its defenders cannot pass either inward or outward, on the other hand into a mere war-cry.... Between the two lies a narrow borderland.” Religion, therefore, “sinks into a war-cry.” Between the war-cry and the dogma is a narrow borderland. The dogma is “fenced about with walls.”

The recurring word is a constant phenomenon. In paragraph 498, for instance, we find the sequence “evil,” “debased,” “noble,” “beautiful,” “good,” “noble,” “beautiful,” “evil,” “debased,” “evil,” “good,” “good,” “great,” “great,” “greatness,” “greatness,” “noble,” “greatness,” “great,” “greatness,” “greatness,” “greatness,” “evil,” “good,” “evil,” “good,” “evil,” “evil,” “good,” “good,” “evil,” “good,” “good.”

It is true that the devoted and determined fellowship of Oxford men who are destroying the last position of the Historicides have long known that Bishop Stubbs was nothing more than a writer of slovenly text-books. But the general public has not known, and, occupied with wider interests, has been forced to take the statements of the pedants on trust.

Yet, if Oxford is to continue to be the chief University of the world, it will only be by permission of the public. This is a truth which the pedants will only realize when it is too late. If every father who has a son whom he hopes will proceed to the University reads what I have set down here—reads it, and trusting nothing to the assertions of one man’s pen, makes further and more exhaustive inquiries—we shall very soon see the frantic capitulation of the Old Guard. I believe the dons and pedants of whom I have been writing to be honest men enough. They are sincere in their attitude, no doubt. It is comfortable to think that everything is for the best in the best of all possible Universities, but the obstinacy of a dozen mules in a mountain pass impedes the progress of an army, and because his stupidity is not the hybrid’s fault is no argument against his removal.

A certain number of Oxford dons are convinced that the Oxford system is without flaw.

The Historicides are the worst offenders, though some of their brethren who control the study of Pagan Theology and Philosophy are not far behind them. Both classes alike are convinced of their infallibility.

Yet let the educated public realize that—

No one who wishes to become a B.A. and M.A. of Oxford is forced to study

(*a*) English Composition or Literature;

(*b*) The History of the British Empire;

(*c*) The geography of the globe we inhabit;

(*d*) The scientific discoveries and inventions which have profoundly altered the conditions of modern life;

(*e*) Any of the Fine Arts;

(*f*) Any of the Laws of England;

(*g*) The rules which guide the Law Courts in estimating the value of human testimony;

(*h*) The Art of Government and Economics;

(*i*) The Art of War;

(*j*) French, German or any Modern Language.

In my discredited trade of a novelist—that is to say, the trade of people who create out of their own brains new things—we have a technique of phrase. Unimportant to the pedant, as are the methods by which we are sometimes able to secure a great, and even grateful public, we still have our little catchwords and there is a certain freemasonry of craft.

One finishes up, it is generally understood, with “a canter down the straight.” Bursting away from the restrictions of the Essay, glad to have finished with an academic convention which says one must write this way and so, let me attempt to crystallize just what this paper means, from my own, and doubtless limited, point of view. It means this.

Upon the sturdy oak, generations old, in which the University may be typified in allegory, a dusty parasite of ivy has been clinging. This parasite, which has clogged the newer shoots from the old tree, is a parasite of the classical and especially of the history don and pedant. Law, Science and Mathematics have entered Oxford as a bright light comes into the dark. Here, all is well. And in regard to the older arts, I think, and many other

people who are in the centre of the ferment of change think with me, all is about to be reconstituted in a freer air. It remains as a wonder that past and present undergraduates, the guests of the hotel, remain so individually and cumulatively distinct from the obstructionist section of its managers and landlords.

In the darkest days it is astonishing to see how many men reading history have been able to educate themselves brilliantly in spite of all opposition. And if Oxford can send out into the world such men as she is giving to the community now, in spite of the influences which have checked and hampered them, what may she not do in the days which are at hand, when the parasite shall be cut down from the old tree and growth shall be unhampered by the incompetent?

Those days, I am convinced, are at hand, and, curiously enough, it is the influence of James Anthony Froude which is precipitating the revolution. What the great historian could not do in his life, the immortality of his writings is accomplishing. Under Froude's banner a devoted and influential band is enlisted. The work of change is proceeding with wonderful vigour and rapidity.

Let us gird up our loins to push and elbow out the discredited and effete, and if necessary pay hirelings, and employ executioners to end the unfortunate history of the immediate past, to destroy the Obstructionists, the Historicides, and those whom only annihilation will convince of error.

In conclusion I submit that I have neither been conjecturing what I cannot find, nor insinuating what I dare not assert; and if a sincere conviction and a prolonged scrutiny give one title to a part in the growing condemnation of the Historicides I shall be proud to think that I have taken a very humble place in the coming renaissance.

THE BROWN AND YELLOW PERIL

IV

THE BROWN AND YELLOW PERIL

A FEW FACTS

This essay, which is a logical conclusion of the last, requires neither rhetoric nor adornment, were I able to decorate it with them. It is a statement of plain fact, and I make no apology for writing it as simply as possible.

The paper is to be regarded in the light of an appendix to the article on the Oxford Historicides rather than a separate excursus in line with the others in the volume.

The facts are accurate, and if I could turn them into an easily-understood diagram and post it up on every hoarding in the kingdom, I believe that I should be doing a public service.

In 1885—the year when we failed to rescue Gordon—Mr. W. S. Gilbert produced his "Mikado."

Which nation or government were, in 1885, the more fitting themes for satire—the English or the Japanese? The scandals of the Crimean and Boer Wars; the uniform successes by sea and land of the Japanese in their struggles with China and Russia, supply us with no uncertain answer. The Itos, Togos, Oyamas and Kurokis, whom our librettist represented to us as Ko-Ko, and so on, have taught us—and even the disciples of Moltke—that the supreme artists of war are at Tokyo and Osaka, not in London, Washington, Berlin, Moscow or Vienna. The thirty millions of Japanese who, in the sixties of the last century, were at the mercy of the white powers, are to-day engaged—politely enough—in ushering out of China the trades of Europe and North America.

During the last half century a yellow race, a non-Christian people, has caught up the white races and, so far as the *ultima ratio regum populorumque* is concerned—in the bloody tournament of war—has even surpassed them. Like every one else, I have been alarmed at the sudden transformation scene. The Mikado who stage-managed the Chino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, is very unlike that Mikado who danced for us on the boards of the Savoy Theatre.

> "*My object all sublime*
> *I shall achieve in time:*

To make the punishment fit the crime
The punishment fit the crime."...

sang Mr. Gilbert's Mikado.

The punishments which Mutsuhito, the real Mikado, has fitted to the Czar's crimes of seizing Port Arthur and Manchuria have been—

(1) The sinking or capture of every Russian man-of-war east of Suez.

(2) The siege and capture of Port Arthur.

(3) The defeats of The Yalu, Nan-shan, Telissu, Laio-Yang, The Sha-ho and Mukden.

(4) The expulsion of the Russians from Manchuria and Korea.

(5) The cession of half of the island of Sakhalin and indirectly

(6) Civil War and bankruptcy in Russia.

One little point of comparison between ourselves and the Japanese will make my meaning clear.

We all remember the shameful tale (told, not by Mr. Burdett-Coutts alone, but by eminent doctors, including Sir Frederick Treves, whose words were published in Blue-books) of the utter disorganization and incompetence of the medical and surgical departments attached to the British army in South Africa.

Sir Frederick Treves has inspected the Japanese hospitals for the wounded, and pronounced them to be perfect.

The Japanese, your wiseacre retorts, are a race of clever imitators. We invent; they borrow. They can copy but they cannot produce masterpieces in the arts and sciences. It is good rhetoric but bad reasoning. The Japanese have borrowed from us neither their art, nor their ethics. Never conquered in the past, they have developed a civilization peculiarly their own. The first Mikado was reigning six centuries before Julius Cæsar landed his legions at a point not five miles from the spot where I am writing. The Japanese are an ancient race with points of view diametrically opposed to our own; and like the Jews they have lived long and learned wisdom.

> "If I say anything about Shakespeare," writes Baron Suyematsu, "I fear I should at once be considered to be overstepping propriety; but I must say that even Shakespeare's plays, some of which I have read or seen performed, have never given me such impressions as do the plays of Japan. Whenever we go to the Western stages we appreciate the decorations, we admire the splendid movements and good figures of the actors and actresses, and, so far as we can understand it, the striking elegance and powerful delivery of their dialogue, and we enjoy ourselves as much as could be hoped; but on coming home we find nothing left on our minds which might serve as an incentive in our future career. No inspiration, no emulation! Such, then, seems to be the difference between our dramatic works and those of Western nations."

Observe that the argument of "art for art's sake," is treated by the talented Japanese diplomatist with the very sanest scorn.

> "In Japan," says the Baron, "the idea of the 'encouragement of what is good, and the chastisement of what is bad,' has always been kept in view in writing works of fiction, or in preparing dramatic books and plays. I know very well that there is some opposition to this idea. They say that the writing of fiction should be viewed as an art. Hence, so long as the real nature and character are depicted, there is an end of the function of these works. I do not pretend in any way to challenge this argument, but I simply state that it was not so regarded in Japan. Consequently, with us, some kind of reward or chastisement is generally meted out to the fictitious characters introduced in the scene, and these representations, either in books or on the stage, are carried out to such a pitch as to leave some sort of profound impression on the minds of the readers or of the audience. Whatever the other remaining parts may be, these features always remain uppermost in the minds of the reader or of the theatre-goer. The prominent point thus produced is generally a transcendent loyalty, such as a loyal servant would feel for his master; the great fortitude and perseverance which one exhibits in the cause of justice and righteousness; severe suffering for the sake of a dear friend; the devotion of parents and their self-sacrifice, great suffering, or even self-sacrifice of a wife for her husband, or of a mother for her son, to enable the fulfilment of duty to the lord and master. I can myself remember many times shedding tears when reading works of fiction, or when listening to the singing of dramatic songs, or while witnessing dramatic performances. This peculiarity seems to be wanting on the Western stage. I remember once in London, years ago, my eyes becoming moist when I saw a character on the stage, who was being taken away as a prisoner, shaking hands with the man who had been his dear friend, but who ought to have been suspected as the cause of his being taken prisoner, and told him, as he went, that he would never suspect or ever forsake him, giving the audience a strong impression of chivalric moral strength. But that was only a solitary experience."

As these lines come before my eyes, as I remember the siege of Port Arthur, I wonder at the subtle irony lurking beneath Baron Suyematsu's remark—"Japan is now in alliance with Great Britain; she may not *perhaps* be worthy of that alliance, but one may be assured she is doing, and will always do, her best to

deserve it." The italics are mine.

The heroism displayed by the Japanese in the late war was almost unparalleled. I believe only one spy in Japan was discovered. He was kicked to death. No pro-Russian party existed in Japan.

The Japanese are accused of being dishonest traders. But Japanese contractors disdained to rob their fellow-countrymen who were risking life and limb before Port Arthur. Read and re-read *The Garter Mission to Japan*. Lord Redesdale could detect no signs of arrogance on the faces of the men who drove back Kuropatkin's regiments into Siberia or sank the Baltic fleet.

Some superficial thinkers say that the Japanese are merely mediæval knights fighting with quick-firing guns instead of lances. This is the veriest nonsense. They are *practising* what was *vainly preached* by troubadours and romancers to the Brian de Bois Guilberts of the Middle Ages....

When engaged in the composition of my novel *The Serf*, I studied in detail the lives of the paladins to whom were chanted the *Chanson de Roland*, and the stories of *The Round Table*. My conclusions can be studied in that novel which is now in a sixpenny edition. I found very few "Ivanhoes" and plenty of "Front-de-Boeufs" at the Court of Richard "Yea-and-Nay," who, loyal and filial soul that he was, joined with the King of France in making war on Henry II., his own father.

There is great force in Professor Inazo Nitobe's implied criticism of European chivalry.

> "Did a monarch behave badly, *Bushido* did not lay before the suffering people the panacea of a good government by regicide. In all the forty-five centuries during which Japan has passed through many vicissitudes of national existence, no blot of the death of a Charles I., or a Louis XVI. ever stained the pages of her history."

Whether that be true I do not pretend to say. But what I do know is that the throne of England, from the conquest of the country by the first William in 1066, to the accession of the third William in 1688, has been held on a very precarious tenure.

The Conqueror himself warred with his son Robert. The latter, and his brothers, gave examples of a *fraternum odium* worthy of the pen of Tacitus; Stephen was virtually deposed; Henry II. was attacked by his own children; a party of the barons supported John against Richard I., and French invaders against John; Henry III.'s reign was a long record of civil war; Edward II., Richard II., Henry VI. and Edward V. were deposed and murdered; Richard III. was dethroned and slain in battle; Charles I. was executed by his own subjects; James II. betrayed by the founder of the Churchill family. Of a truth the virtue of loyalty has not been the predominant feature of the Anglo-Saxon races. Our greatest novelist, Thackeray, mocks at it. Ever since the Renaissance most of the political philosophers of the West have preached the doctrine "Render *not* unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

> "The love that we bear to our Emperor," continues Professor Inazo Nitobe, "naturally brings with it a love for the country over which he reigns. Hence our sentiment of patriotism—I will not call it a duty, for, as Dr. Samuel Johnson rightly suggests, patriotism is a sentiment and is more than a duty —I say our patriotism is fed by two streams of sentiment, namely, that of personal love to the monarch, and of our common love for the soil which gave us birth and provides us with hearth and home. Nay, there is another source from which our patriotism is fed: it is that the land guards in its bosom the bones of our fathers; and here I may dwell awhile upon our Filial Piety.
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> "Parental love man possesses in common with the beasts, but filial love is little found among animals after they are weaned. Was it the last of the virtues to develop in the order of ethical evolution? Whatever its origin, Mr. Herbert Spencer evidently thinks it is a waning trait in an evolving humanity; and I am aware that everywhere there are signs of its giving way to individualism and egotism; especially does this seem to be the case in Christendom.
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> "Christianity, by which I do not mean what Jesus of Nazareth taught, but a mongrel moral system, a concoction of a little of obsolete Judaism, of Egyptian asceticism, of Greek sublimity, of Roman arrogance, of Teutonic superstition, and, in fact, of anything and everything that tends to make sublunary existence easy by sanctioning the wholesale slaughter of weaker races, or now and then the lopping of crowned heads,—Christianity, I say, teaches that the nucleus of a well-ordered society lay in conjugal relations between the first parents, and further that therefore a man must leave father and mother and cleave to his wife. A teaching this, in itself not easy of comprehension, as Paul himself admits, and very dubious in application, meaning, as it so often does, that a silly youth, when he is infatuated with a giddy girl, may spurn his parents!
>
> "Christ certainly never meant it, nor did the decalogue command, 'Thou shalt love thy wife more than thou shouldst honour thy father and mother.'"

The dark, unfathomable eyes of our inscrutable Oriental friends are surveying us. Is it likely that they fail to perceive such patent facts as the dwindling of the birth-rate, the ever increasing thirst for material pleasures which is the characteristic of our urban population, the growth of Socialism, which is its complement, the ignorance of the rulers, and the obsolete education of the ruled?

We boast of our genius for colonization. Boasts are not facts.

For a century Australia and New Zealand have been English colonies. The population of Australia is smaller than the population of London: that of New Zealand is less than a million. Japan is nearer to Australia and

New Zealand than they to England. The Japanese are a nation in arms; the English rely for their defence on professional armies. Whilst there is a German fleet at Kiel and a French fleet at Cherbourg, the bulk of our ships must remain in the vicinity of the Channel and the German Ocean. We are the allies of the Japanese, and the Japanese are threatening the Americans, who are rebuilding San Francisco with funds paid to them by the insurance offices of England.

Now I am no alarmist, *but* the Japanese have invented for themselves a high explosive, the shimose powder. I am no alarmist, *but* the Japanese have just launched the *Satsuma*, possibly the most powerful of all men-of-war. I am no alarmist, *but* the Japanese are turning school-masters and drill sergeants to four hundred millions of Chinamen, and the Chinese have been pronounced by General Gordon and Lord Wolseley to be excellent soldiers. Sir Robert Hart, the Englishman most likely to prove an accurate prophet, has warned us against the renaissance of China. The guns of Togo's fleet have served Europe with notice to quit the further East, and what the Japanese have taught themselves, they may teach the Chinamen undisturbed.

The pre-eminence of Japan in the Far East to-day is due to her admirable system of education.

From *Japan by the Japanese*, a work edited by Mr. Alfred Stead, and published by Mr. Heinemann, I propose to select certain information which may startle even retrograde educationalists. *Japan by the Japanese* is a collection of studies on Japan written by no globe-trotters, but by Japanese thinkers and statesmen of the highest eminence. In the list of contributors I notice the Marquis Ito, Field Marshals Yamagata and Oyama, Count Okuma and Baron Suyematsu. The essays on education are from the pens of Count Okuma, Baron Suyematsu, and other specialists. My humble opinion is that the authorities who direct the teaching of Modern History at Oxford would do well to substitute *Japan by the Japanese* for Aristotle's *Politics*, Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and Maine's *Ancient Law*, which are the only text-books in Political Science prescribed by the University Examination Statutes. I may be peculiar, but I prefer the views of Ito, Oyama and Okuma to those of Aristotle, Hobbes and Maine.

As my last essay dealt with the education supplied at Oxford University, it will be well to begin by considering the Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto. Six colleges comprise the former and five the latter. But, unlike the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge these colleges are schools for the highly specialized study of some art or science. At Tokyo the colleges are those of Law, Medicine, Engineering, Literature, Science, and Agriculture; at Kyoto of Law, Medicine, Literature, Science, and Engineering. At both Universities there is also a University Hall established for the purpose of facilitating original investigation in Arts and Science.

One thing is very noticeable in comparing the University of Tokyo with the University of Oxford. Amongst the least popular of the Honour Schools at the institution on the banks of the Isis is the Law School. At Tokyo the College of Law, in which the student has the option of specializing on Law or Politics, is by far the favourite. After Law comes the College of Engineering, and the College of Literature is a bad third.

It is to the College of Literature (the equivalent of which at Oxford are the Honour Schools of Languages, dead or living, and the School of Modern History) that I would call the reader's special attention. The Modern History School is the most popular of the Honour Schools at Oxford; but at Tokyo between 1890 and 1900 there were only 106 students who devoted their time to General History, and 87 to Japanese History. On the other hand, no less than 651 were engaged in preparing themselves in Law, and 390 in Politics.

In September 1901, 567 undergraduates were attending a Law course, 409 lectures on Politics; but only 28 were listening to teachers of Japanese History, while 48 were enrolled in the classes for General History.

The advocates of Greek insist that the Greek language is the finest of all instruments for training the human mind. The Japanese do not agree with our retrogrades. Greek, apparently, is not taught at any School or University, though Latin is amongst the subjects which a Japanese medical student is expected to have mastered.

Another great distinction between the Japanese and the English system is, that only picked men are permitted to avail themselves of a University education. Further, before proceeding to the University the undergraduate must have passed through a school specially preparing him for one of the University Colleges.

"This type of school," observes Professor Sawayanagi, "is exclusively peculiar to the educational system of Japan, as there is no equivalent either in Europe or America."

In the section of a higher school which instructs candidates for the Law and Literature Colleges of the University, the subjects taught are Morals, Japanese and Chinese languages, Foreign languages, History of Logic and Psychology, the elements of Law, the elements of Political Economy and Gymnastics. The foreign languages are English, German, and French, of which two have to be selected.

"Surely," remark the gentlemen who prepared the article on University Education in Japan, "a professional man who aims at a high position could never be satisfied with one language. Certainly it would be impossible for any one to keep up with the rapid progress of the world which takes place in all the higher branches of education with only one European language at his command."

It is pathetic to think how blind are the rulers of secondary education in this country to a truth so self-evident.

Before proceeding to a special school preparing candidates for the University, a Japanese boy must have been at a Secondary School, which is an institution similar to one of our great Public Schools. Here, again, the Japanese lay far more stress on essentials.

At how many of our great Public Schools, if any, are the elements of Law (which may be defined as the rules of the club to which every British citizen belongs) a subject of instruction? The elements of Law are a regular feature in the Secondary Schools of Japan. Sooner or later every Englishman or Japanese is brought in contact with the law of his land. For what conceivable reason is Law excluded from our Public School course of education?

Once more, in a Japanese Secondary School, boys are taught the elements of Political Economy. What proportion of Etonians, Harrovians, and Wykehamists have opened a book on Political Economy before they have left school? Yet ought not every member of the community who intends to exercise his right of voting at a General Election to be cognizant of the main arguments, for instance, that may be adduced on behalf of Free Trade or Protection?

The appended table will help any Public School boy or his parents to estimate the vast difference between the Japanese and the English conceptions of a liberal education.

IN JAPAN.	IN ENGLAND.
Secondary School (from 12 years to 17 years of age).	Public School (from 12 years and later to 19 years of age).
Subjects taught—	*Subjects taught—*
(1) Morals.	(1) Religious instruction.
(2) Japanese language.	(2) English language.
(3) (*a*) English, French or German.	(3) French, Latin, Greek.
(*b*) Chinese Classics.	
(4) History.	(4) English History.
	Roman "
	Greek "
(5) Geography.	(5) Geography (a little).
(6) Mathematics.	(6) Arithmetic.
	Euclid.
	Algebra.
(7) Drawing.	(7) Drawing.
(8) Gymnastics, Drilling.	(8) Gymnastics.
	Athletic Sports.
(9) Singing.	
(10) Natural History, Physics, Chemistry.	
(11) Elements of Law.	
(12) Elements of Political Economy.	

The aim of the Japanese statesmen has been to produce a fine character residing in a strong body, and a memory stored with knowledge having a direct bearing on the problems of modern life. It seems to me that a nation led by men trained according to the method I have indicated mus*ceteris paribus* be more intelligently governed than one like our own, where the conduct of affairs is entrusted to persons like Mr. Arnold-Forster and Mr. Brodrick, who, after leaving a great Public School, attended Oxford University and obtained their degrees through its Modern History School.

I pass from Secondary to Primary education. Guardians of children of school age (*i.e.* over six years of age) are under the obligation of sending them to school to complete at least the ordinary Primary School course. The subjects taught to the Board School boys and girls of Japan are:—Morals, the Japanese language, arithmetic, and gymnastics, and, according to local circumstances, one or more subjects such as drawing, singing, or manual work, and for females sewing. The higher Primary Schools complete the education of the average Japanese of the lower orders. At the higher Primary Schools, the scholar continues to study Morals, the Japanese language and arithmetic, and learns, in addition, Japanese history, geography, the elements of science, and, as optional subjects, agriculture, commerce, manual work and the English language. Drawing, singing and manual work, and for females, sewing, are compulsory. There are also special commercial schools.

The scope of this essay does not permit me to contrast in detail the Japanese with the English primary education. Both were established about the same time. I am not so rash as to pose as an authority on the education of a country which I have never visited. But one point has greatly impressed me. Tommy Atkins has been educated at the Board School. It is complained of Tommy Atkins that he neglects hygienic precautions against diseases like enteric. The rank and file of the Japanese army were remarkable for their scrupulous obedience to the rules of hygiene. My deduction is that the Japanese school and the Japanese curriculum are, in one essential at least, superior to the English. I may be wrong, but I do not think it is probable.

What are the conclusions to be drawn from the information which I have extracted from *Japan by the Japanese*?

“England,” signalled Nelson, “expects every man to do his duty.” Those words should ring in the ears of each of us. The dons and school-masters of the country should remember that they are Britons first and Oxonians and Cantabs afterwards. The warnings which we have received from Tokyo and Berlin are so impressive that the Anglo-Saxon races will be insane if they do not take them to heart. The masters of the fate of the British Empire are, at a general election, the citizens possessed of the franchise, and between the general elections the King, the members of the two Houses of Parliament and the Civil and Military servants of the nation.

We must educate our masters, the electorate and the officials who obey, or pretend to obey, its mandates. To-day the educational system of Great Britain is, as a whole, an anachronism. If the next generation of Anglo-Saxons is educated like the last, the brown and yellow peril will become acute. To a psychologist, the Japanese and the Chinese with their cool, iron nerves, seem more fitted for a world of dynamos and flying machines than the neuropathic Englishman or American. Should, then, the latter be worse educated than the former, the British Empire and the United States may expect to follow the fate of the Spanish and Roman

Empires.

THE MENACES OF MODERN SPORT

V
THE MENACES OF MODERN SPORT

"*Imponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis.*"
JUVENAL.

I very well remember the morning when the post brought me an advance copy of the first number of Mr. C. B. Fry's *Magazine*.

One saw at once, as the public has since seen, that the periodical struck a new note in regard to matters of sport. It was to be both practical and idealistic, sport in the realm of action was to stand side by side with sport in the sphere of thought. Mr. Begbie sounded the keynote, in his beautiful inaugural poem—when the clean, strong body sings a hymn of praise and thankfulness for its splendour of strength and health; because the joy of physical achievement is so intense, because the currents of the blood run fast and free.

It is a curious fact in life that a fine and noble thing in itself nearly always harbours or begets an ugly parasite. No plant grows unhampered by the insect world, a filthy mildew—so the curator of a famous picture gallery told me the other day, will appear mysteriously upon the finest canvas.

In particular, certain phases of sport to-day present the observer with a curious spectacle. There is a monstrous liaison, a horrid entanglement between sport and drink!

It is as well to put it quite bluntly at the beginning. If an unpleasant fact is not stated in the frankest way, it loses its appeal to the hearer. The man in the street, gets up and strangles a half-statement with the flippancy of a catch-penny juggler at a country fair. One is not heard.

I say that a grave danger menaces modern sport and that the danger is just this....

The more popular games of England are being disturbed and discredited in a marked manner by the amount of drinking—plain, vulgar *excess* in alcohol—which surrounds them and follows in their train. A great number of sportsmen know this perfectly well and genuinely deplore it, but I am not aware that the subject has been properly ventilated as yet, save perhaps by "temperance" cranks and prejudiced or ignorant people, who hide a polemic puritanism under the banner of a misused word.

Some time ago I had occasion to spend a night in a large manufacturing district in the North of England. I put up at a local hotel.

It is a large place standing in the four cross roads where electric trams stopped—a definite centre of the town. The landlord is the secretary of a most prosperous local cricket club, he is intimately concerned with the local football—Association—and is a prominent swimmer.

At all times of the year the district is intensely interested in sport, and the hotel is a headquarters of it. The walls of bars and smoking-rooms are covered with photographs of this or that local team, the whole talk is redolent of sport—and your Northerner or Midlander is generally the keenest sportsman of all.

It was quite obvious that this hotel was extremely and noticeably prosperous, everything proclaimed it. I was introduced by the landlord, a thoroughly good fellow, to various local football players and swimmers. The talk of the smoke-room was entirely occupied with sport, there was a real knowledge of, and love for games. One heard shrewd and penetrating criticism, one saw fine healthy-looking men who were certainly no mere machines for the decomposing of their lunch and dinner! In fact, the evening was thoroughly congenial.

Next morning after breakfast, I smoked my pipe in the bar parlour. At one side of the place was a counter which formed a barrier between it and the ordinary tap-room. Three young and powerful men came in—it was about 9.30 in the morning. They asked the barmaid for a drink I had never heard of—"three warm sodas, please." The girl opened three bottles of soda, poured some hot water into each glass and gave it to the customers.

When they had gone, I asked her what was the meaning of this.

“Oh,” she said, “there was a football supper last night These lads were all drunk. They often come for a warm soda in the morning, it sobers them.”

The remark was a prelude to some interesting information. The girl was a native of the North. She had been in the bars of several Lancashire public-houses; what she told me was simply a dreary record of personal experience. In effect, it was this: After a big football match the hotels were always crowded, packed so closely that it was difficult for a late-comer to enter. On such occasions the staff of pot-boys and men to keep order was recruited from the stables. Drunkenness, distinct drunkenness, was very common. The members of the two teams were often the core of a welter of riot. The players themselves were treated by their admirers until they frequently became intoxicated. Quarrels and rows of all sorts were of almost momentary occurrence. “I hate all big sporting days,” she said. “You’ve no idea what we girls have to put up with. They all seem to go mad. But there, the takings are enormous so I suppose sport’s good for trade!”

I tell this little story not because I was unaware of the facts before, but because a “picture” is always valuable in making a point, and because a coincidence has provided me with this picture at the moment when I am writing on this subject.

Every one knows the state of things in this regard thoroughly well. It isn’t sporadic—it’s *systematic*. And day by day in many districts, you may witness the paradox of a man who is above his fellows in the fine cultivation and training of his body, using his gifts in the finest way—and drugging himself with poison directly afterwards. And not only does the athlete himself do this, but his influence has a far-reaching effect upon others. The hero corrupts inumerable valets, and what should be an uplifting thing for the spectators, becomes, in the nick of time and in the punctual place, an opportunity for unbridled indulgence.

Nearly every footballer knows that what I say is true, and still the thing grows. It is not too much to say that, at the moment, drink stands before the progress of popular sport like an armed assassin in a narrow path. I shall give other instances in a moment, but at this point it is proper to explain that one is no fanatic. Sport calls aloud for temperance to-day, but sport is not concerned with teetotalism. Every active sportsman must cultivate each sense to its highest power, that is a condition of success in sport. But there is a sixth sense, not sufficiently recognized by writers attacking an evil no less than by sportsmen who concur in it.

It is the sense of proportion.

Nothing is more necessary than “proportion” in the consideration of such a question as this, a subject of supreme importance in modern sporting life; yet to-day the sense of proportion has been lost by sportsmen and adherents of sport alike. Long ago Plato pointed out that we shall never have perfect men until we have perfect circumstances, and it is the people who condemn a good thing because of its occasional misuse who destroy their own case. Alcohol is a good thing, sport is a good thing, together they are harmless even; but moderation has been overstepped and we are in the middle of a definite and serious crisis.

A *Blue-book* of statistics of crime has just been issued. From it I find that drunkenness is greatest in the great football centres of the North and of Wales. The thirstiest parts of the country are those in which football is the most eagerly played and watched, in which innumerable local sporting papers are published, where the man in the street is a football expert. This is at least significant, though so patent and obvious is the evil that it almost seems a waste of time to pile proof on proof. Nevertheless, before I turn to drink in connection with other varieties of sport, it will be as well to give all my evidence.

A well-known North-country baronet, a famous sportsman in his day, an ex-member of one of His Majesty’s ministries and at this moment an enthusiastic volunteer, told me, a short time ago, that in his district the abuse of drink was ruining local sport. “Decent people no longer care to attend football matches,” he said; “the element of drink and ruffianism is becoming too much in evidence. A new class of spectators has been created, men who care little or nothing for the sport itself, but who use a match as a mere opportunity and an excuse for drinking.”

A shipowner, a member of the present Parliament, who has large interests in Yorkshire and the further North, entirely endorses these remarks. “If you go into the cheaper parts of the field at any big match in our parts, you’ll see that every other man has a bottle of spirits in his jacket pocket which he drinks at half-time. And afterwards—well, the brewers that have tied houses anywhere near a football ground know that they have a gold mine. A brewery will pay almost any sum to secure a free house in such a position.”

Finally, a well-known Northern clergyman, a relative of my own and a fine sportsman in his time, albeit an old man now, writes to me as follows: “I am glad you are writing on this question. The wives of the colliers and mill-hands in my district all tell me the same story. They say that the Saturday afternoon matches are a curse to the home. It is not the few pence that the husbands spend for admission to the field which matter, but it is the drinking that follows, often protracted till late at night. For my own part, as a small protest, I absolutely refuse to subscribe to local football clubs in any way. They are becoming centres and occasions of vulgar vice. Such money as I have to spare for sporting objects I give entirely to cricket.”

It is a far cry from football to golf. At first glance any one would say that of all games golf is the most free from any taint of attendant excess in drink. This is not so. The evil is less widespread, just as the game claims fewer adherents; the class of men who can afford golf is not a class with many temptations to drunkenness; women play the game and their presence is a safeguard. But the evil exists nevertheless, and this is the measure of it.

In the famous clubs, where all the great players go, drinking to excess is an unknown thing, of course. But

during the last few years, especially in the South and West of England, many small clubs have been started which are almost entirely supported by the residents of the country towns near which they are situated. And I have not the least hesitation in saying—however much my statements may be combated—that many of these clubs are becoming little better than shebeens for discreet and comfortable over-indulgence in drink.

No one will attempt to deny that the usual football match is regarded by thousands of people as a mere alcoholiday. I am certain that many people will attempt to deny what I am going to say about mushroom golf clubs. When one frankly points out this or that abuse existing among the middle and upper middle classes, these classes always become shrill in their defence. There is a sense that while it is a duty to expose the faults of the poorer people, amusing to attack the follies of the "smart set," to write of the failings of the intermediate class is to let the cat out of the bag. One may give the cat's tail a pinch to let people know she is there, but that is all.

But I am writing for only one class, the fellowship of true sportsmen.

In many of the smaller golf clubs drinking has almost destroyed the game itself. A comfortable club-house is erected, far more money is spent on it than upon the links themselves, and men spend day after day playing bridge and—*drinking*!

Golf becomes what Napoleon called a "*fable convenu*," and while there is generally a knot of real and enthusiastic players, there is always a large residuum of idle members who turn a splendid game into an excuse of indulgence in drink. These are the people who imagine that they would lose caste if they entered any of the hotels of the small town in which they live, and so the local golf club becomes the substitute.

I have a picture in my mental vision of a man, once an athlete of great renown, for many years after that a good sportsman. Now he is supposed to devote himself entirely to golf—for he is no longer a young man. This erstwhile athlete spends all his days in a certain golf club. He is the oracle of the place. He plays very little, but rests upon past laurels. And all day long he drinks, drinks, drinks. He has gathered a society of kindred spirits round him, and, from the sportsman's point of view, the club, never eminent in any way, has ceased to exist. It is atrophied by alcohol—though its finances are in a flourishing condition owing to the fact that there is no licence to provide for, and the profits on drinks amount to about thirty-three per cent.

I am not trying to draw a general conclusion out of a particular instance. Any one who really cares for sport and has a deep sense of its high mission and place in life will bear me out. Many of the smaller and less-known golf clubs are nothing more or less than discreet drinking-places, secure from observation and shielded from adverse comment under the too comprehensive ægis of "Sport."

In my time I have had something to do with pugilism, and here is another sport which, especially among its professional exponents, is being ruined and degraded by drink. One of the most pathetic experiences I have ever had was to watch the utter hopeless downfall of a famous boxer some years ago. His name was a household word, he was an American negro and one of the simplest, kindest, most thoughtless children of nature who ever breathed. I never knew a more sunny, genial creature. I saw him, during one year, succumb to the temptations of drink thrust at him on all sides by admiring "sports." I was with him a week or two before he died from drink.

I remember, as a young man, going to an ice carnival at Hengler's Circus with one of the cleverest middle-weight boxers of modern times. He had invited many of his friends of the ring, and there was a big supper afterwards. Of course none of the men were in training, and they were surrounded by the usual crew of wealthy wasters who counted it an honour and privilege to ply them with liquor.

I am not going to make a picture of that occasion for you, but one final scene still remains very vividly in my memory. A month before I had seen my middle-weight friend in the ring. His proportions were perfect, the muscles rippled easily and smoothly, he had the clear eyes of youth that Homer (supreme chronicler of fights) sings of. To look at him made one glad to be young and strong, to know that one was a man, with cool blood and a quiet heart.

On the night of the supper I saw him lie like a log. All the soul had gone out of his face, the pig and the wolf struggled for mastery in that debauched mask, and a tipsy young stockbroker was pouring a bottle of claret over the boxer's crumpled shirt front!

In the early part of last February, I spent part of an afternoon in an up-stairs room at the National Sporting Club. An Oxford friend, one of the most promising amateur feather-weights of the day, was having a practice spar with a professional. After the bout, we went down-stairs to the bar—always the bar!—and I talked to the boxer. He told me the same story, the story I already knew: Drink, drink, drink. It permeates pugilism, it makes it a sport which is looked upon with suspicion by many people—simply because of its associations, simply because of the blight of alcohol which surrounds it and seems inseparable from it.

England is a nation of sportsmen still. We take sport as seriously, we pursue it as keenly as ever did the Greeks themselves. But we are allowing this danger and reproach of drink to be mingled with some of our national pastimes. There is no doubt whatever about it, and, as I see it, the reason is this.

We are forgetting to idealize sport, to realize what it *means* no less than what it *is*.

I feel sure that if we can once get back to that attitude, the drink trouble will cease automatically. No man can be a thorough sportsman without a latent sense of the inherent fineness and dignity of sport. We want an organized campaign to wake up that latent sense!

Historical analogies may be out of fashion in some departments of life with which I am not here concerned. In sporting matters they are, and ought to be, very valuable in helping to keep the ideal of sport at a high level.

For example, among the finest sportsmen of all time, the ancient Greeks, who were the finest athletes? History tells us they were the Hellenes. They were mostly townsmen living in a country of dense cultivation and beholden to the gymnasium and the palæstra for their recreation, the noblest outcome of which was the Olympian meeting.

The greatest historian of Greek life and thought points out that the Hellenes "were always abstemious," and they were the leading athletes of the world.

The Macedonian ideal was quite different. The Macedonians despised bodily training in the way of abstinence, and drank to excess. They were hunters and open-air people, they reproduced the life of the savage or natural man with artificial improvements, but when they came into the palæstra they were nowhere at all. A century ago in England many a rollicking county squire would spend a day in the saddle and a night under the table, but he could not have run a mile in five minutes to save his life.

Alexander the Great himself despised the abstemiousness of the Greek athletes, and though he thought in continents, he drank in oceans, and died in a drinking bout. He was a mighty hunter and fighter, but he was not a true sportsman, because he despised the control and self-denial which a man must practise if he would earn that dignity and title.

These last paragraphs may savour a little of the don, and possibly suggest an emanation from the shrunk skull of the pedant. I hope not, but believe me, they are proper to my purpose. After the brief summary I have given of the actual position, it is helpful to survey the whole question from a wider point of view than that of the immediate present.

Let us consider the sporting history of a time much nearer our own, the Elizabethan age. Every one was a sportsman then, because every one was practised in the use of the national arms and was a potential soldier —as the hidalgoes of the Armada found in 1588. But nevertheless, nobody was a teetotaller. "Temperance drinks" were not invented, because most people knew how to be sportsmen and temperate as well.

Shakespeare took ale for breakfast. Drake, Raleigh and Sir Humphrey Gilbert put to sea with barrels of beer for the sailors—"for ale went to sea in those days," yet every peasant of the country-side was still expert with crossbow and English yew. In that high age drink had not become a fungus at the root of a goodly tree.

A great many sportsmen to-day drink far more than the ordinary person who knows nothing of them but their achievements in this or that game would suppose.

The quantity of alcohol consumed by some sportsmen who are eminent in their respective sports would often both astonish and alarm the layman. There is a very simple pathological reason which explains the fact. Oxygen is needed for the destruction of alcohol, as for the destruction of most poisons. Hence it follows that the athlete can get rid of his quota of alcohol without *immediate* deteriorating results. Last year I was at Oxford during eights' week, the time of strict training. The stroke of a college boat, by no means an abstemious man at ordinary times, had been compelled to forego his usual potations. But there came what is known as a "port night," an evening when the crew were allowed to drink a certain quantity of port. The stroke exceeded this quantity, went back to his rooms, became thoroughly intoxicated and had to be helped to bed. Next day his boat made a bump. A strong man—an athlete—can and very often does drink far more than an ordinary man without any apparent loss of power *at the time*.

Because there is no apparent deterioration the subject imagines that none is taking place, and the ordinary non-athletic person will find it difficult to realize that when I say that many fine sportsmen drink too much, I am speaking literal truth.

How often do we not observe that a sportsman has a brilliant and public career for a time and then suddenly disappears from the first rank—"drops out," and is no more heard of? His sporting life is brilliant but it is short.

Yet there is no natural reason why the athlete's athletic life should be a short one. Muscles and tissues do not easily wear out from continuous and careful action. Any doctor will admit as much. Indeed, an alert and healthy brain with correct muscular co-ordination and with due action of the reflexes is built up, stimulated, and sustained by hard and interesting physical exercise.

Nevertheless, in too many cases the athlete unconsciously shortens his sporting career by the too free use of alcohol. He of all people can least afford to overstep the bounds of strict moderation, yet the comradeship of sport, its jolly social side brings with it great temptations, and temptations which are daily increasing.

We can get a very clear idea of the toxic influence of the least alcoholic excess upon the sportsman by observing the psychology of the really confirmed inebriate.

In a chronic inebriate, loss of spontaneity is the most marked characteristic. Such an one has to *think* of his walking—a thing he never had to do in his temperate days. He feels safer walking with a stick, he develops an agoraphobia, or dread of open spaces. There is a distinct falling off in the accuracy of the purposive movements.

No one knows more about the effects of alcohol upon the brain than Sir Victor Horsley; *auspice* Horsley, I have recently made some study of this question myself. Now the athlete, the true sportsman, *depends as*

much upon the condition of his brain for success as upon the condition of his body.

That is the finest thing about sport, and in many quarters it is the least understood thing about it.

Now if we pursue the analogy of the confirmed inebriate we are able to detect exactly the same symptoms, though in an infinitely less degree, in the player of games who consciously or unconsciously drinks more than is good for him.

At a critical moment in a game (let us say) the cerebellum or little brain fails for a single instant to transmit its message *via* the nerve telegraphs of the body to the motor muscles. The catch is missed, the pass is made half-a-second too late; the little extra dose of alcohol has disorganized the accurate execution of muscular action—and perhaps a match is lost, a sportsman's career definitely injured.

Even in small quantities—provided always these quantities are in excess of the reasonable individual need—alcohol has a definite and harmful effect upon the actual performance of a voluntary movement.

In an essay of this length one is compelled to take a broad summarizing view of such a question as it deals with. There has been no space to enter into dozens of aspects of the bad effect that drink is having upon the sport of the day. But I have said enough to show how great the evil is, and I am absolutely convinced that hundreds of sportsmen will agree with me that the poison is active, the danger imminent.

It is an article of my creed that sport in its best sense means not only the salvation of the individual but the consolidation of the country. All sedentary and spoony sins, effeminacy, softness, and every sort of degeneration *cannot* form a part of the sportsman's temperament. Neither you nor I have ever known a good sportsman who is mentally "wrong." When eggs are oysters and tea is Chablis we may meet with such a phenomenon, and not till then.

What a preposterous and malignant thing it is, therefore, that a cloud is forming over one of the noblest of modern forces! Every genuine sportsman *must* get hot and angry in the presence of such a filthy and disturbing parasite as this is. Leagues, societies, confraternities, are all very well in their way. To accomplish, to carry out a *material* purpose, they are the best possible machinery. But I am not so sure that they are always as valuable when the point is a moral, or rather an ethical one. Be this as it may, and it is a difficult question to settle, I am sure, at least, that a hundred thousand pamphlets, offices—and a glib secretary—in Victoria Street, even a piece of coloured ribbon as a visible badge of enthusiasm, are not nearly as powerful as a quiet and *individual* discountenance of what is base and dangerous. A cynical daylight always follows too theatrical enthusiasm.

Sportsmen are not theatrical, and their influence can be exerted without pledges of war and a little book of rules. The reprobate purlieus of sport can be cleansed by any one who is awake to the lurking, growing evil on the one hand, and the high mission, the "commission" is a better word, he holds as a "sportsman" upon the other.

But certainly something must be done. It is too much that we should allow whisky, which is two-thirds amyl-alcohol; beer, which is full of pectins and colouring matter; brandy, which is German potato spirit—all the allied filths—to sap and weaken a national heritage, and the chief preservative of manhood which remains in this neurotic age.

I put a line from Juvenal at the head of this article. Florio translates it—

> "A wise man will use moderation,
> Even in things of commendation."

"Sapiens" should have been translated "sportsman," for it is a synonym in this case.

I do not know whether one should say that drink or betting is the greatest menace to modern sport. The latter, at any rate, permeates it in an alarming degree.

Mealy generalities are of no use, and it is a mere derision to pretend that nearly every branch of sport is not imperilled and besmirched by betting.

Dumb protest is always going on, but sportsmen themselves hear very little of it. Papers devoted to sporting matters do not speak out, and the campaign against betting made by the layman only reaches the sportsman's ears with a muffled sound—like a drum beaten under a blanket.

Moreover, if the general public desires anything it always declares solemnly that it is true, the only truth. If it does not, it bawls out that it does not exist and has never existed. The Christian Scientists, for instance, are beginning to say this of Death itself, and the non-sporting majority, who want to make money without earning it, most certainly desire the continuance of betting.

I am quite confident, therefore, that the second half of this essay will be assailed quite as widely as the first part was, when it appeared in a magazine. In the first part the facts are very carefully authenticated, as they are in this one. Yet the obvious retort was hunted out with all the enthusiasm of a short-sighted bloodhound, and in some quarters one was spoken of as a sensation-monger, who probably made a good thing out of his wares!

That, of course, is very easy to say, but it is not argument. It is nevertheless welcome, because the vigour of the attack always shows the strength of the position.

In connection with the Betting Question, the mind at once turns to horse-racing. There is much to be said in this regard, and I intend to treat of this branch of sport later on in my statement. But I propose to begin with other instances of the evil. Evil it undoubtedly is. The massive harmony which the body and mind sound in correlation under the influences of true sport, is made discordant by it.

Like the youth of a nation, sportsmen are, in a sense, the trustees of posterity, and we must unite not only to recognize the fact but to crush the evil.

No sportsman ever takes a puritanical view of betting. It is the sort of person who thinks vaccination immoral, and whose conversation is like a glass of still lemonade, who thinks that a wager is a sin. This is a fault. I believe that I am voicing the point of view of the sportsman—which is simply the conviction of the sensible man—when I say that there is absolutely no harm in an ordinary wager. You put what you can afford to lose upon the result of a horse-race or a football match. If you win you are rather pleased and you have hurt no one. If you lose you are not hurt in any way, and you have done no more than make a mistake in prescience.

It is necessary to define the difference between a bet which is harmless, and systematic betting which is eventually an attempt to obtain the emoluments of industry without the effort of toil, an attempt which—and here is the very essence of the matter—leads to an abominable dishonesty and the most scandalous abuse.

And now, by graduated steps, let us proceed to a definite presentment of the evil as it exists on the day when you read what I am saying. You will please observe that one begins upon the small organ and in the minor chord. The swell and the crescendo will start later on, until we have full pedal music and thunder of the big pipes!

It has always been the boast of Oxford and Cambridge men that the Boat-race was in its very nature an event which was utterly removed from the gambling evil. One had a wager on one crew or the other, perhaps—most people did not—but the great rowing match was at least pure of offence in this regard. No public harm was ever done. I do not for a moment say that the Boat-race is provocative of general gambling, or is injured by it, as so many other sports are injured. But the fact that I am going to relate is symptomatic. It shows how the gambling spirit is growing and radiating until, in one instance at any rate, the Boat-race itself became the incentive to dishonesty.

Upon a dull day on the Stock Exchange, a group of the younger members began to make wagers about this event. The race was known to be a near thing. The next day the wagers were continued until quite a little “market” was established. The prices fluctuated according as the reports of the training of the crews came to hand. The whole thing was but half serious, though in a day or two large sums of money became involved.

One member of this *coterie*, a man who was known to be a sportsman, and one whose word had influence, deliberately circulated a false report as to the time in which Oxford had rowed a course, queered the market, and made a considerable sum.

In regarding the gambling question the attention of the ordinary man is generally focussed upon the race-course and upon the bookmaker, as he squirms his careful way through life. People either forget or don’t realize that most of the minor sports are being utterly spoilt and ruined by betting.

Cycle-racing is still a sport which is keenly pursued, though perhaps it has declined somewhat in popularity of late years. In many of the suburban districts round London there are fine cycle tracks, built with all the last improvements which the track-architects of America have discovered. In the Midlands and North of England there are magnificent tracks in nearly all the principal towns.

Cycle-racing is popular, draws enormous crowds, and draws the small bookmaker also. It is a known fact that at any big cycle-race meetings bets are made with all the briskness and regularity possible.

Large sums do not change hands. Half-crowns, sovereigns and half-sovereigns represent the actual ready-money transactions, though in sporting public-houses, for days before a big local event, much greater amounts are wagered.

It is no use for any one to pretend that this is not so—I have innumerable facts. One instance, which may be interesting to set down here, was related to me by a friend who is a builder of scientific miniature rifle ranges. At one time he resided in Manchester, and frequently visited the great pleasure-gardens known as Belle Vue in that city. My informant used himself to make a book on the cycle track in this popular place of amusement.

“I used to make quite a lot of money,” he told me. “It was great fun.”

“But how did you do it?” I asked him. “Describe” ...

“Oh, it was quite easy. You waited till the one or two policemen who were strolling about were not near; they were never too anxious to bother one in any case. Then I used to jump up on the railing and say ‘I’ll take money!’ I used to get a lot of punters round in a minute by shouting the odds.”

How many readers will call out, “Much ado about nothing.” “What harm,” they will ask, “can the small wagers of a crowd at a Manchester cycle-race possibly do to Sport?”

I reply that these wagers do the very *gravest* harm, not perhaps to the wagerers, but to real Sport itself. The fact of so many hundreds of people having a financial interest in the success of this or that rider at once puts the rider—a sportsman—in a position of danger and temptation. The low class of person who has his being in

the side-scenes, the tortuous *coulisses* of Sport, is always at hand to make a disgraceful bargain with the athlete. Men who are accustomed to regard life as no more than a game of cunning come with gold in their soiled hands. And if the sportsman succumbs, then not only is a bar sinister charged on his personal escutcheon, but the whole tone of Sport is lowered. Every single instance of this kind fosters a base and ignoble view of Sport, and it *does* matter very much indeed that Tom loses half-a-crown, Dick makes five shillings, and Harry comes out "even on the afternoon."

If fools *must* gamble, why are they not allowed to do it apart from such a fine and splendid thing as Sport? I would far rather see a nasty little Casino established in every town, where fools might lose what they can't afford in the hope of winning what they won't work for, than see them tempting athletes and spoiling the game.

Of two evils choose the least—a make-shift maxim, but sound in its way!

Very few dwellers in the South and West of England are aware of the extraordinary interest taken in the Midlands and the North in pigeon-flying. This is a good and fascinating pastime. It certainly interests me, and there is something very stimulating to the imagination in it. The careful breeding of strong-pinioned birds, the training of them, the vast distances they cover under changing skies and down the long invisible slants of the wind—it has an appeal, has it not? Certainly it requires real knowledge and care.

I don't suppose that there is any minor sport so utterly spoilt and degraded by gambling as this sport is.

They tell a good story in the North which epitomizes the whole thing. It is a reprobate yarn, but it is funny.... An old pitman lay a-dying. He had been a worthy fellow, a very well-known breeder and flyer of pigeons, and his only fault had been that he wagered what, to him, were reckless sums upon the results of pigeon-flying matches.

He lay dying, and the Vicar of the parish sat by his bedside and tried to ease the fear of passing from one life to another by telling the man of what might well await him in the next world.

..."Did thee say as I should be a gradely angel, parson?" the old fellow said.

"You've lived a straight life, John."

"Angels 'as wings, don't they?"

"The poets and painters have always imagined so, John."

"Well, I'm goin' first, and I'm reet sorry to say good-bye to thee, Vicar. But I make no doubt thee'll be up there soon theeself. Now I'll tell thee what I'll do when thee arrives. *I'll fly thee for a quid!*"

That makes one laugh—it makes me laugh at least—but it is merely one of those pleasant jests which divert the mind from the contemplation of an evil. Clergymen in the Midlands and the North have told me the saddest stories of humble homes ruined, broken and bankrupt, because of the gambling on pigeon-races. The moral fibre of many a collier and millhand is often destroyed by betting on this sport. Women and children suffer in consequence, rates are raised in the local commonwealth, and once more "sport"—that misunderstood word—is soiled and besmirched in the public mind. And those of us who are capable of taking a broad and comprehensive view of affairs must allow that the sport-hating Puritan has at least got some reason for his distorted point of view.

He can say, and with perfect justice, that betting has killed professional sculling.

He can point out, and no one can deny it, that even the quiet, but highly-skilled game of bowls is permeated with the gambling spirit, that owing to the large sums put up as prizes and wagered upon results, the temptation to players in a public contest is enormous.

"What is this sport you vaunt so loudly?" the Puritan said. "Surely it is a thing which is essentially bad and wrong, because of the evils it excites. When the American press accuses English oarsmen of 'doping' an American eight's crew owing to heavy betting on the part of the other crew, when American athletes refuse to dress in the same room as a competing team of English athletes—is it not obvious that sport cannot be the worthy and fine thing you say it is?"

I have voiced the shrill cry of prejudice and exaggeration. But truth must always be the basis upon which exaggeration is built. No one, to my theory, can successfully exaggerate a lie. The result is redundant, and so, unconvincing, while the attempt itself is like trying to add four pounds of butter to four o'clock.

In the space of an article such as this, I must not unduly prolong the dismal story of how the *minor* sports are being injured by gambling.

Yet the whippet-racing of Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Northumberland has degenerated, and the sport must be given a bad name—though it is the owners and not the dogs who ought to be hung!

Pigeon-shooting—if that is indeed a sport, which I personally beg leave to doubt—has become no trial of skill and readiness, but an occasion upon which, when the betting is in favour of a right-hand shot, a needle is sometimes put into the left eye of the bird so that it may swerve to the right upon its release from the trap and increase the difficulty of the aim.

I am informed that birds are frequently blinded in this abominable way at local English meetings, and also in

Germany—in the interests of gambling. In this matter, however, it is only right to say that the Hon. E. S. Butler—one of the crack pigeon-shots of the day—tells me that the conditions at Monte Carlo are absolutely fair, though the betting is most heavy.

There is hardly any "gambling" in English golf. Private matches sometimes provoke a heavy wager between the players, but that is not gambling. In Scotland, however, where most towns have links which are open to everybody for a fee of threepence, there is an immense amount of gambling among the poorer classes. Now it is certainly far better that the Scotch mechanic should spend his Saturday afternoon playing at a fine game than in watching other people play it, as his English brother does at a football match. But it is an enormous pity that such facilities as the poorer folk enjoy for sport should be abused and spoilt. A well-known Scotch clergyman, a favourite preacher of the late Queen's, tells me that the gambling at golf makes a constant watchfulness necessary on the part of players. "Many of them will cheat if they can," he said; "and you'll know how easy it is to cheat at golf? It's just the money aspect of the question. It's small wonder that a man will move his ball an inch from under a bunker, if it's necessary and the other fellow isn't looking, when perhaps a third of his week's wages depends upon the lie."

Again I would punctuate my instance with the moral it affords. Here also sport suffers. If I did not believe in the inherent nobility of sport, if I was not absolutely convinced of its supremely important place in the life of both soul and body, I should not be writing this. But as one goes on with this dismal catalogue—no very pleasant task, one gets into a fever of indignation. "*Duo quum patiuntur idem, non est idem*," of course. No two men experience identical effects from identical causes. But true sportsmen will at least share something of my feeling. And it's no use to set out alone to kick the world's shins. The world has several million shins to your one. We must *combine*—we who love sport and realize what it means.

The Hermes of Praxiteles is a perfect type of all that is *physically* fit and fine—and so *spiritually* also—in man.

Take that statue and regard it for a moment as a concrete manifestation of all that is meant by the word "sport."

And then, suppose that the Hermes of Praxiteles were your own possession, that you had it in your own house. Would you allow a crew of people who cared nothing for great art to cover it with mud?

.....Now to gambling as it affects the major sports.

Cricket is fortunately untouched, save very occasionally in League cricket. It is pleasant to think of our national game as unsmirched.

But football, which we may well call our other national game, is most deeply and gravely involved.

Of the two games, rugby is cleanest in this regard. In the Northern Union District there is more gambling than elsewhere, but, take it all in all, rugby does not greatly suffer.

But what can one say of Association football?

.....There are many quite well-known instances of goal-keepers being bribed. They are, indeed, so well known that people who are interested in the game, and know anything of its polity and ways need hardly be reminded of them.

The buying and selling of players—for it is just that—and their transference from club to club, is responsible for much of the evil, as I see it. But in Association especially, not only does sport suffer from the occasional dishonesty of the players, but the game itself provides a constant incentive to the spectators to forget the beauty of its *raison d'être* and to regard it merely as an opportunity for speculation.

Is running untainted? Not a bit of it!

Professional running is in an even worse condition than when Wilkie Collins wrote his remarkable novel about it—though *professional* running no longer holds its old position or keeps its old importance. But the Sheffield handicaps, and the Scotch professional contests at Edinburgh, still exist as prominent features in the sporting life of our time. And as prominent scandals also.

Amateur running is far more widely entangled with betting than most people are aware.

Some time ago, on the County Ground at Bristol, there were six men in a heat for a 120 yards race. Five of these were friends and the sixth was almost a stranger, but one whose record, by comparison, would certainly have secured him the race in the opinion of experts.

This last gentleman was taken aside before the race and offered ten pounds "To let Bill win."

Please remember that I am neither inventing nor exaggerating, that I have chapter and verse, that I have gone into the whole question most carefully, that I relate *fact*.

From the ancient times when gladiators fought with the brutal spiked cestus, until the present day, boxing has always been a fine sport. Among the Romans it was certainly brutally misused, and in our own time of the Prince Regent it was not free from the charge of brutality. To-day, in the humane progress of ideas, the ring cannot be assailed in this regard. We have refined this splendid sport until it stands purged of all imputations of savagery.

Of savagery, yes; of the far meaner vice of gambling, no! Who can say for certainty that any fight, in Bristol,

Liverpool, Cumberland, at the N.S.C., “Wonderland,” or even at the Belsize, is absolutely a square fight? Who knows whether the blind old heathen goddess of chance has not been harnessed by the money-mongers and is waiting with malevolent intention at the ropes?

No one can say with *certainty*, outside the Army, Public Schools, and the ’Varsity contests.

The rascality of the ring would fill a number of a magazine. Boxing is no longer a national sport, which goes on everywhere and, as a matter of course, under the full sunlight. It has sunk into a local amusement or a located disgrace. And it has sunk simply and solely because of gambling.

Wrestling, that worthy and ancient English sport, has almost ceased to exist. I have had a cottage in Cornwall for some years and it is my privilege to know many of the champions of the past in this chief old home of the game.

I know what it was once, how splendid and stimulating to the life of the community. And what is wrestling to-day? It is a sporadic contest, between great players indeed, but one which is utterly spoilt and discredited, when looked upon from the true sportsman’s point of view. In the most cynical and open way many of the sporting newspapers discuss the probability of this or that bout being a “square” one or not. With the indifference with which one would discuss the chances of an egg proving to be fresh or stale, some journalists determine the pros and cons of honour and dishonour.

I have a friend who is a theatrical agent and *entrepreneur*. Among his various activities, he is the manager for the champion wrestler of the world. “You never know,” he said to me at dinner, “you never really know the truth about the *bona fides* of many wrestling bouts until the contest is over. Of course men like ’——’ and ’——’ are absolutely square. They are the *haute noblesse* of the game. They’ve got to be. But you may take it from me that dozens and dozens of contests are faked in the interests of the betting ring.”

After extreme youth is over, life mercifully dulls the hunger for perfection in all of us. There never was a time in the history of horse-racing when people did not bet. Nor does one expect the impossible. But while racing was never more popular and more strongly organized than it is to-day, it was never so provocative of evil, so *manqué* from the true sportsman’s point of view. The men of carrion passions, and the army of muddy knaves who live by the exploitation and bespatterment of the noblest of sports, are legion.

The smaller fry who make existence possible for the knaves—the ordinary men who bet regularly on races—are millions. There is no need to insist upon the fact, it is as dismal and obvious as a lump of clay. The whole atmosphere of the turf is like the degradation of the air in a close bedroom with the windows shut.

It is not my province or intention here to go very deeply into illustrative detail in the matter of the turf. It is better to be luminous than voluminous. But there are one or two points which may be new and instructive for the non-gambling sportsman.

Here is a recent quotation from a well-known English “sporting” paper—one of those, by the way, which conveys “humour” direct from the pit to the front page.

It is about some English jockeys in America—

> “Our jockeys are having a hard time, in a way, inasmuch as they are being kept under the closest surveillance by Pinkerton detectives. They are practically caged off from the public, are escorted to the scales and paddock, are not allowed to speak to any one except an employer, and then only when mounting, and their valets must wear a distinctive uniform, with numbers on their sleeves. This is reform with a vengeance, and by no means agreeable to some of our young swells, who are also shadowed after the races.”

“*By sports like these are all their cares beguiled!*”

Was Goldsmith a prophet?

It is not always easy to remember that the professed aim of the Jockey Club is “the furtherance of the breeding and preservation of the English thoroughbred horse.”

Yet to-day the officers of foreign armies buy Australian walers. They won’t purchase English stallions. I belong to the “*Cercle Privée civil et militaire*” of Bruges, a great military centre. Every day the General commanding the district and his staff are in the Club. They tell me that English horses are no longer looked upon as they were upon the Continent.

Does not this “*give one furiously to think*,” as my friend the General said here the other morning? Doping in the interests of the gambling market seems to be beginning to tell!

The gambling industry is organized with consummate skill and great business capacity.

Gambling by post is almost incredibly upon the increase. In Middleburg and Flushing there are twelve huge betting firms. One person employs ninety people in his office, and has his own printing establishment, which is always glutted with work.

Often £1000 is received by one firm in a single day—nearly all in small bets, and all from England. The post-offices of Dutch towns of the size of Middleburg or Flushing normally keep in stock stamps which will supply the needs of a population of 20,000 persons. Now, these two towns are compelled to keep enough to supply a population of 200,000—all for the “furtherance of the breeding and preservation,” etc., etc.

Here is another significant fact which may possibly elucidate the recent and somewhat cryptic utterance, “The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton just as certainly as the battle of Spion Kop was lost upon the playing fields of Sandhurst.”

The fact is this ...

In the issue of *The War Office Times*, May 25, 1905, occurs a flagrant puff of a bookmaker, who without the humour of a less eminent *confrère* who described himself as a “brass finisher” in the census returns, calls himself a “high-class turf-accountant.”

“We strongly advise any of our readers who require a high-class Turf-accountant to send for Mr. ——’s book of rules, bound in leather, which will be sent post free to applicants. We have convinced ourselves that this is a thoroughly genuine business, and, as such, we have no hesitation in recommending it to our readers.”

I have the book “bound in leather,” and a good many others also, which I acquired for the purposes of this article.

And precious and elaborate productions they are! The ingenuity of red morocco and gilding, of alluring propositions and the suggestion of a bludgeon-sturdy honesty deserve the highest praise. I was especially delighted with the telegraphic code of one hero, which used the names of fish to symbolize the amount of “investments.” “Salmon,” for example, means “put me ten pounds on.”

All the denizens of ocean are used save one....

With commendable modesty, or possibly a fellow feeling, this worthy has omitted “shark.”

One has said enough to outline—I hope vividly and strongly—how Sport is being spoilt by gambling.

Sport, thank goodness, is not yet retrograde owing to this curse. But it may be. Let us all remember that progress is merely the power of seeing new beauties. The more Sport progresses unhindered by gambling, the sooner will it take its high place in life and fulfil its noble destiny.

And every sportsman can do something to help that progress.

The fiery Erasmus writes this of Sir Thomas More, who was a thorough sportsman, to his German friend, Ulrich von Hutten:—

“Gambling of all kinds, balls, dice and such like he detests. None of that sort are to be found about him. In short, he is the best type of sportsman.”

“*Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.*”

NOTE.—*Since this essay was written, three short articles appeared in the sporting columns of the Daily Mail which are a striking corroboration of my contentions. All the articles appeared within a few days of each other, and I print parts of them as an appendix.*

FOOTBALL AND ALCOHOL

HOW PLAYERS MAY LENGTHEN THEIR CAREERS

By William McGregor.

I dealt a few days ago with the question of what constituted a sensible diet for footballers, and hinted that the so-called special training which teams undergo on the eve of a great encounter was often prejudicial rather than beneficial.

Now, a well-known medical man, who fills the position of official doctor to one of our leading football clubs, met me on the evening of the day that the article appeared and said (excuse the apparent egotism, but it is necessary for the purpose of the article), “That was a really good article of yours in the London *Daily Mail*. You put the matter precisely as I should put it, as a medical man. You might follow it up with an article pointing out that there are two abuses which footballers suffer from, viz. errors in regard to eating, and errors in regard to drinking. If you can put in a strong plea for either the abolition of alcohol, or the sparing use of alcohol by footballers, you will be doing the game a good service, and you will be doing the players a good service.”

I then remembered a little incident which occurred at the Aston Villa ground early in the season. The occasion was a match played during that tropical weather, weather which was utterly unfit for football. Violent exercise such as football imposed a very severe strain upon the men that day.

As soon as the interval was over, a medical man came up to me, and in quite excited accents said, “I say, Mr. McGregor, do you know that they have been giving the visiting team spirits during the interval? I have never heard of such a foolish proceeding. Why, alcohol is the worst possible thing for footballers to have at any time, but more especially on a day like this. You could not have anything more heating than spirits.”

Speaking from a general rather than a professional or technical experience, I agreed with him. I asked him, as a medical man, what he would have given the men under such peculiar circumstances. His answer was, “At any rate, I should not have given them alcohol. I do not know that I should have given them anything. The best thing would have been for them to have rinsed their mouths out with cold water.”

CHAMPAGNE OR LEMONS?

In a match which took place in the Midlands last season, the home team gave a particularly poor display in the second half, and one of the directors said to me, “They have been behaving foolishly to our men. The trainer gave them champagne during the interval, and I do not think that is a good drink for them to have. The momentary feeling of exhilaration following a glass of champagne soon wears off.”

If the form manifested by the team which had the champagne that day may be taken as a criterion as to the merits of champagne as a stimulant for football purposes, then all I can say is, that I never want to see a team receive such a stimulant again. It may not have been the champagne that caused their poor form; but at any rate their play was poor.

I recall another interesting instance in which champagne played a part. I am going back a long time now, but the circumstances were exceptional.

Away in the remote eighties, Moseley (as they often were then) were in possession of the Midland Counties Rugby Challenge Cup, and one of their supporters was interested in Aston Villa. I do not know whether it was Kenneth Wilson or not, for Kenneth Wilson, I may say, was a Pollokshields man, who was in business in Birmingham. He was a splendid athlete, and played for Aston Villa, and also for Moseley under Rugby rules simultaneously. I expect he had something to do with the incident.

At any rate, the Cup made its appearance at Perry Barr on the day that Aston Villa were playing an English Cup tie with Darwen. Now the Aston Villa team of that period, captained by the great Archie Hunter, was as bonny a set in a social sense as I have ever known. They were grand footballers, and played the game for all they were worth when they were on the field. But it was a loose and lax age as compared with the present football era, and during the interval some one filled the Cup with champagne, and the Villa players drank to the prosperity of the Moseley Club—and very bad football they played after the interval, too.

I do not suppose for a moment that any one player had much champagne, but from what I could see of their demeanour, I came to the conclusion that champagne was a bad thing to play football on. At any rate, the Villa had the greatest difficulty in avoiding defeat at the hands of Darwen. If I remember aright, the great Hugh McIntyre, who died in London last year, and was better known as a Blackburn Rover, kept goal brilliantly for Darwen that day.

THE GREATEST ENEMY

You hear of well-known footballers kicking over the traces, passing from club to club, and marring what might have been great reputations. If you will look into the history of these men you will find that in nineteen cases out of twenty their bad relations with their employers are due to the fact that they are accustomed to imbibe too much alcohol. Alcohol is, indeed, the footballer’s greatest enemy; at any rate, to put it simply and straightforwardly, no man ever played football the better for taking alcohol, and many men have played it infinitely worse by reason of their indulgence therein.

Every football manager likes to get together a team of tee-totalers. If you take the records of the greatest players, or perhaps I might say the great players who have had phenomenally long and honourable careers, you will find that in nearly every case they were either life-long abstainers or rigidly moderate men. I could give many instances if space permitted.

FOOTBALL BOOKMAKERS

WHAT REALLY ATTRACTS LEAGUE CROWDS?

“The public are getting rather weary,” writes a correspondent, “of the professional football promoters’ periodical rigmarole under the heading of ‘Betting at Football Matches.’

“Why not make it ‘Betting on Football‘? Here he would have ‘copy’ for every day in the week, as long as professional football lasts.

“I cannot speak for the south, but, as for the north, it is a fact that football betting is rife in Newcastle, Sunderland, Middlesbrough—thanks to the professional football promoter. It is not done at the matches, but beforehand, on the combination football betting coupon system, but it is betting all the same.

“Thousands and thousands of football coupons are distributed weekly by bookmakers among the working men at the big factories, ship-yards, etc.

“This betting is the sole reason why many of these working men and others, who know practically

nothing of football, take an interest in the League and attend matches in connection with the same.

“The betting is not on a particular match, but on a combination of matches.

“Football loafing and betting will always go hand in hand. There are none so blind as those who will not see. What is more, in this case it would not pay to see. Certainly, the professional football promoter has a great deal to answer for.”

DISHONESTY IN SPORT

STRONG EFFORTS TO BE MADE TO STOP IMPERSONATION

The recent case of a young Hereford sprinter who, by impersonating another runner, secured a prize of the value of £4, and who was ordered by the Bench to pay three guineas towards the cost of the prosecution and refund the prize or its equivalent value, shows that the justices are doing all they can to assist the Amateur Athletic Association in preserving amateur athletics for the pure sportsman.

It is to be regretted that such instances are by no means rare, and the Amateur Athletic Association has several cases in hand at the present time. The Association is, however, determined to put a stop to the practice.

The trick of impersonating amateurs and thereby winning prizes at athletic sports is, in fact, as old as the hills, and years ago used to be carried on unblushingly and free from detection.

One of the earliest cases on record was that of a man at Ashford. His head was as innocent of hair as a billiard ball, and to play the part properly it was necessary for him to wear a wig. He was winning his race easily enough, when his hirsute adornment was blown off by the wind, and the attempted fraud ended in failure.

Quite recently there were two brothers in the army, one an amateur and the other a professional. The latter impersonated the former with sufficient success as to secure the prize; but although the fraud was afterwards discovered, it was felt that the evidence was not strong enough to secure a conviction.

In a similar case in the Northampton district a couple of years ago, the judge took a serious view of the case, and the offender received exemplary punishment.

Strong action is undoubtedly needed to stamp out the practice, and the Amateur Athletic Association will leave no stone unturned in its endeavours to purify it.

VAGROM MEN

VI
VAGROM MEN
[AN ADDRESS DELIVERED TO THE WORKING MEN’S CLUB, ST. MARGARETS’]

***“In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.”*—GENESIS iii. 19.**

In the November of last year—1905—I was invited to consider the problem which is known as “The Unemployed Question,” and to write something about it in a London daily paper. In 1905 the subject was attracting the attention of every one, and it was thought that by means of my own method—the method of Fiction—I might possibly interest people.

I welcomed the opportunity, and wrote a story expressing my views, which was published among the news columns of the *Daily Mail*.

Before the tale began to appear I had several conferences with Lord Northcliffe, then Sir Alfred Harmsworth, the editor of the newspaper. Certain facts were told me; a mass of expert opinion and evidence was placed at my disposal, and I was enjoined to study my new material and write exactly as I felt about the question. No restrictions were placed upon my point of view. I suppose that very rarely indeed has it happened to an ordinary novelist that the ruling powers of a journal which has one of the largest circulations in the world have said, “Here are our columns; come and say what you think in them.”

It is, no doubt, good journalism to print a single article written by a man whose conviction on the subject of the article is diametrically opposed to that of the newspaper in which it is published. A standard of value is created by an exhibition of contrasts. It is good journalism also to print the views of experts such as Mr. Booth or Mr. McKenzie. Both these things are constantly done. But to give a novelist columns of enormously valuable space for some weeks—“news space,” not the space generally reserved for fiction—in order that he may express his own ideas, is very unusual. At the time when this was offered to me I thought it a very great compliment. I can hardly believe that I was mistaken, and I think so still.

I wrote the story, and called it, *Made in His Image*. When it had run through the newspaper it was published in book form. Fourteen months have gone by, and during them I have endeavoured to keep myself informed as to the position of affairs. With the additional knowledge that the past year and its inquiries have given me, I find myself still of precisely the same opinion as I was before. If anything, my conviction is stronger than before. What my opinions are, such conclusions as I have come to, I have been invited to tell you to-night.

I will get to the point at once without further preamble, save only to say how much I value the privilege of addressing you.

For a long time past every class of the community has been exercised by the problem of the unemployed. The question has steadily become more acute year by year, and at the present moment its solution is the most pressing and necessary of all that confront thinking men and women.

I propose to touch briefly upon the existing state of things, to explain what I conclude to be the cause of it, and to set before you my belief as to the only remedy.

In London, Manchester, Birmingham, and all the great cities of England, the streets are full of men with bright eyes, and faces cut and whittled to an edge by hunger. Men and women with kindly hearts and sympathetic natures cannot go abroad in winter unless they taste the bitterness of sights and sounds that tear the heart and lacerate the soul.

Dismal and terrible processions move throughout the streets of our capitals like spectres from the underworld. I have myself, in the course of my investigations, been packed tight among a crowd of tattered, coughing humans in London. I have walked with them, brethren of yours and mine, men who offended and distressed every sense, men who groaned and sighed because they had not eaten, men who exhaled an odour like the caged animals in a menagerie, men who fed, when they fed at all, upon garbage, men who could not wash.

I have seen faces all round me like the faces that the great Italian poet Dante describes as flitting through the gloom of hell. On one side is a face grown witless from hunger, sorrow, and foul environment. It is a horrible face, a face like a glass of dirty water. Another face is simply a grey drawn wedge of cunning; a third man has a face that might have been that of a saint, but the horror of his life has put its heel upon the countenance, and has ground the possibility to pulp. I have stood among living bodies which have no heat in them, a company of ghosts that cough and curse in bloodless voices. And among these gaunt, dismal, and hopeless men the one who can snarl and cry his sorrows loudly is the one who is envied by all the rest. He must have had a meal that day.

I expect many of you have seen something of what I describe, and those who have had this sad experience will bear witness that I am exaggerating nothing. This is not Fiction; it is melancholy Truth. In the opening chapter of the story I wrote on the Unemployed question, I described a meeting of the Unemployed in Trafalgar Square. In the course of the chapter I told how some charitable people drove up with a cart full of buns and bread and butter. Immediately there was a riot. The poor starving people fought with each other for the food like wolves. The scene was horrible. This first chapter appeared on November 18, in the *Daily Mail*. Two days afterwards I met a friend in my London Club who had read it. “My dear fellow,” he said, “you’ve let your imagination run away with you. A story is all very well, but it should closely follow the lines of fact. Don’t you tell me that English workmen are in such a pass that they will fight for a morsel of food in the heart of London. You’re coming it a bit *too* tall, my dear chap.”

He was a ruddy, prosperous friend. As he came into the Club smoking-room he gave a heavy fur coat, which probably cost him fifty guineas, to one of the waiters. He called for a whisky and soda, and sank into an arm-chair of red leather with a comfortable sigh of pleasure. He stretched out his legs towards a blazing fire of logs, and said again, “You novelist johnnies are always coming it a bit too thick, don’t you know!”

My worthy friend was one of those who have eyes but see not; because they won’t see, and don’t wish to see.

Now listen to the sequel—

Three days after this a procession of Unemployed marched along the Embankment in London. Some charitable people did actually bring down a cart of food. *There was a riot and a fight for the food exactly as I had foreseen in my imaginary tale.* It was reported in the newspaper. Five days after I had imagined that, under existing conditions, something *might* happen, that thing actually *did* happen—men came fighting for a scrap of bread in the heart of the Metropolis.

This is what we see in the great streets of London and other towns—the streets full of shops which are crammed with costly and beautiful things, thronged with prosperous people. What we see when we follow the procession of the Unemployed back to the awful dens in which they live is impossible to do more than hint at. To tell the absolute unvarnished truth in a public assembly, to publish a faithful description in a public print is an utter impossibility. These dreadful facts are those which despairing clergymen and ministers, doctors, nurses, would-be helpers, tell to each other in whispers.

I knew a lady whose husband had turned out worthless, and who finally deserted her. Her one source of income was a row of small houses in the East End of London, houses that were let out in rooms to the very poor. My friend was too poor to employ an agent to collect her rents and draw a commission for his work. Every week she did so herself, and one week she invited me to accompany her. I did so, and it was the most horrible day I ever spent. No working man in a district such as this can form any idea of the filth and misery in which the lost, degraded tenants of these houses lived. I shall not attempt to describe it, for it would be a poor return for your kindness in coming here to-night to rob you of your night's rest!

I will merely quote some lines written by Mr. F. A. McKenzie, one of the foremost sociologists of the day. They deal with the lives of the Unemployed in the East End of London, and they are guarded, reticent words.

I read—

> "To say that scores of thousands of them are facing the coming winter with fear and dread is but mildly to imply their situation. They are the derelicts of London, whom the changes in modern conditions have left hopelessly behind. Without crafts, without knowledge, many of them with hope dead, they face a future that good trade can do little to relieve, and bad trade must greatly darken."

"The prodigal son" of to-day plays out the last act of his tragedy, not before a fatted calf, but in a Poplar back room. The shiftless and incapables, attracted by low rent, by the chance of casual work, and by the abundance of relief, drift here. To them are added the scores of thousands of locally born people who are trained in such a way that they cannot be anything else than casuals.

The very streets proclaim the lives of these people. Apart from the main thoroughfares and from certain more prosperous avenues, you are swallowed up in an endless succession of long roads of cheaply built houses. The walls are crumbling, and the bricks seem as though they would fall at a blow; many houses have broken, paper-stuffed windows; there are whole streets where the doors and windows have not seen paint for a generation. The children, babies with ophthalmic eyes, girls dirty beyond belief play in the gutters. The women gossip at the doors. The men, strong, yet none wanting their strength, lounge at street corners.

In home after home you will find that the sole regular wage earned is by a young son, who obtains ten shillings a week as errand boy in the City. On this, with occasional additions from the others, the whole family exists. The mother may obtain a few shillings a week at 'charing,' although such work is scarce in Poplar.

Twenty years ago the poverty of the East End was lessened by the home work which the women could obtain. It is one of the most serious, although often overlooked, factors of to-day that such home work cannot be had save by a few. The aliens in Whitechapel and in Stepney absorb almost all of it. The foreigners are more capable, more thrifty, and more sober, and, save where brute strength is required, our own derelicts stand no chance before them. The homes inside are often enough indescribable. Here and there you find the one room kept clean, but generally dirt is the outstanding feature. The beds are black masses of filth. The walls of the rooms prevent real cleanliness. I went into one two-roomed tenement inhabited by a man, wife and three children. The kitchen was overrun with rats, which had free entrance and exit through numerous holes in the wall. In the bedroom a large part of the lath and plaster wall underneath the window was torn away, leaving great gaps open to the yard. 'Why doesn't your landlord do some repairs here?' my companion asked. 'He won't, sir; he says it is healthy for us to have holes in the walls,' the woman replied. Many of these Poplar rooms urgently require the active intervention of the local sanitary officers.

In such fetid dens, badly built, ill kept, and furnished with the strangest of oddments, most of the Poplar poor live."

If it were necessary and part of my scheme this evening, I could take up the whole of our time in telling the truth about the existing horrors. But I do not think that any one will deny them. They exist, and no one can disprove the fact. Let us rather consider *why* they exist, and what their existence means to the working man.

Stated in a few brief words, this is my theory and my unalterable belief.

IF THERE WERE NO UNEMPLOYABLES THERE WOULD BE NO UNEMPLOYED.

To amplify my statement I will say—and in a moment I will endeavour to prove—that if the idle, vicious, hopeless and sullen scoundrels who act as a drag upon the wheel of the Commonwealth, who have been allowed too long to clog social progress, were removed, the whole problem would be solved.

I beg you to listen carefully to me while I tell you how the *Unemployables* have created the problem of the Unemployed, how they are throttling charitable enterprise, how they are making economic methods of relief impossible, how they are destroying the present and the future of the honest working man. Who are the people I have called "The Unemployables"? What is *their* idea of work and what is the *real ideal* of work? I will answer these questions. I will show you who and what the Unemployables are. I will contrast their attitude towards honest toil with the attitude of honest men towards toil, and when I have done this I will try to explain how these people are injuring you and me, what a terrible burden they are upon our backs.

The month before my story dealing with the Unemployed appeared in the *Daily Mail*, a series of articles on the same subject was published. In some of them the Unemployables were painted with perfect fidelity and vividness. I take some paragraphs here and there to make a connected picture.

“Half-past eleven on Friday morning in a back street in the most poverty-stricken and most largely relieved district in Canning Town. A group of women wait around the gates of a chapel, from which doles are being issued. Dirty, ragged and untidy, they certainly are, but hunger-stricken—No! Their children playing in the roadway near by are ill-clad, filthy, and in many cases bare-footed, and do show signs of under-feeding, but not the mothers.

These are the wives of the habitual Unemployed seeking relief.

The curious stranger notices that some of the women go from the relief station to the public-houses. Let us look inside a few of these establishments. In a side bar of the first place we enter, we find eleven women, exactly of the same type as those soliciting charity without. One of them carries a recently-born baby in her arms, and another has a little girl two years old clinging to her apron. Each woman has a glass in front of her. Some of them have been here since half-past nine in the morning, and will stay for hours yet. In the next drinking shop is a party of nine, in the next but two, while in the last of all we find seven. Now one rises to go out, for her hour has come to beg for aid from school or parson or Unemployed fund.

An hour later we can see the husbands of these women amusing themselves at the street corner higher up. Five bookmakers’ touts are busy among them at one cross roads alone.

At this time, when we are threatened with a new Unemployed agitation, it is as well that the causes of much of the distress in some of the Unemployed areas should be understood. For several years the public has tried to deal with the sufferings of the very poor by sentimental means. Each winter has brought increase of relief, and each increase of relief has helped to render more permanent the problem it has set about to cure.

We have now in one district alone, a large number of people, totalling many thousands, incapable of regular work and unwilling to attempt it. They have been taught to lean on charity to aid them, and they have proved themselves apt pupils. Their homes will, as a rule, for sheer uncleanliness, bear comparison with the dwelling of an Australian aborigine. Their children are systematically made untidy, and are given a neglected air in order more successfully to extort outside aid. Parental love is so dead that, in very many cases, the mothers will sell the boots given to their children in order to buy gin.

This is no vague, general charge. Three years ago the readers of the *Daily Mail* entrusted the writer with a sum of money to spend on meals and shoes for needy children in this district. Teachers from many schools assured me that such effort would be wasted. ‘Buy the shoes and give them to the children to-day,’ they said; ‘and to-morrow the shoes will be in the pawnshops, and the mothers will have drunk the proceeds.’ It was necessary for us to construct a careful system of guard checks to save the children from their own mothers.

Last year four separate general funds were distributing doles and aid among these people in one district. A fund for the children, the best of all, kept them from starvation. Two outside agencies collected many thousands of pounds and scattered them about. The West Ham Corporation spent over £26,000 on relief works. What has been the result? The first outcome was to draw to this district many of the loafers from other parts, who saw the chance to obtain something for nothing. The more money that came, the more the number of Unemployed grew.

There is, without question, an amount of perfectly genuine distress, distress that should be relieved. But it is not, as a rule, found in the ‘Unemployed’ processions. The men who are making the most noise could not work properly if they would, and would not if they could.

This is a hard saying. Some facts may help to prove it. Many employers of labour around the docks agree in testifying that their difficulty is to induce casual men to remain long at their work. A man will take on a job for a couple of hours, and then ask for his 1*s.* 2*d.* (7*d.* an hour) and go. ‘Look here, guv’nor, I’ve had enough of this,’ he exclaims, with perfect truthfulness. He has secured enough to see him through the day—why should he trouble after more?

The labourer of the casual loafing type who works for two days a week thinks that he has done all his duty. His work is worth comparatively little when it is done. The municipal relief work at West Ham last winter spent £14,000 on material and £12,000 on labour. On the most liberal estimate, the labour value obtained was worth not more than £4500, and the tasks would have been done by any contractor for that amount. Many whose names were down on the Unemployed Register refused work when offered to them.

Last winter the workhouse authorities began to distribute relief on a more liberal scale. A number of distressed cases were taken in without labour. The number increased until it reached 473. Then the guardians resolved to re-establish the labour test, and to make the applicants do some work for the aid they had. The numbers at once fell to 119.

The people have been taught to look upon the outside public as a milch cow, and the guardians and municipal authorities as officials from whom everything possible is to be extorted. The members of an ‘unofficial’ relief committee invited me last week to one of their meetings. A bloated woman came asking them for aid. They gave her a small dole, with repeated injunctions that she was to lie to the relieving officer if he asked her if she had had anything. ‘Take care that your fire is out and your cupboard is bare when the relieving officer comes,’ one member added.

Here, then, is the problem to be solved. A great army of habitual loafers and incapables live off the woes of

the genuine Unemployed. The latter, too, often suffer in silence. The spongers, hardened by long experience, adepts in every trick to impress a generous public, ply their calling more boldly each year.

Such are the men who will not work—the ‘work-shy’ men, the ‘bone-idle’ men, the ‘wasters,’ the scoundrels who turn the holy virtue of charity into a foolishness, and who recruit the ranks of those who keep society in a state of siege.

These people form the majority of the Unemployables. Please remember that I am not talking of the *Unemployed*, but of the Unemployables. The men who won’t work form the majority, but the hopeless herd of Unemployables is also swelled by those who *can’t* work. They can’t work because their life has never taught them how to work. From infancy they have been trained to depend upon charity, from childhood they have been denied an education which will enable them to earn a living.

Their very birth has been charitably conducted. The parish doctor has given free aid, the blankets have come from a local fund, and probably there has been a Salvation lass scrubbing the room for the mother. From infancy they are accustomed to look to charity for their very comfort. A boots fund supplies them with shoes, free meals are their main sustenance, and if they are very fortunate a holiday fund gives them a week in the country. Their first lessons are in begging, and they are taught to lie and to cringe to the givers of doles.

When such children leave their slum schools, what awaits them? There is little or no possibility of the slum boy learning a trade, while the girl finds it impossible, even if she desires, to learn housewifery by going to service. The factory awaits the girl, and odd jobs, as potboy, errand boy, runner for bookmakers, or the like, await the lad. At seventeen or so the youth becomes a man, and applies for casual labour at the docks or elsewhere. About the same time he mates with a girl who has been working at the factory.

By this time he has forgotten nearly all he learned at school. What can reasonably be expected of him?

It is impossible to condemn this second class of Unemployable. If you and I had been brought up in the same way, we should live as they do and behave as they do, in all probability. If a child has seen his father and mother, his grandfather and grandmother, his uncles, aunts and all the friends of the family habitually go to bed in their boots, he will sleep in his boots too. If he lives in a village where every one goes to bed in boots, and has never been out of that village nor witnessed the customs of any other village, who is to tell him that sleeping in boots is an unpleasant trick which spoils the sheets? A stranger who came upon a child of this village and told him that he was a dirty little boy who ought to be punished, would be an idiot who understood nothing of the power of environment, the truth of education or the facts of life.

But the first, and largest, class of Unemployables who have worked, can work, know how to work, but *won’t* work, is in a very different case, and is formed of very different people.

These are the men who are lost.

For my own part, I believe that idleness is the greatest of all sins, the chief of all crimes. It is not those offences against the law of God and the ordinance of man that we punish which are always the worst. I may be wrong, but I give it as my opinion that sloth is the prime sin of all those lusts and iniquities that war against the soul and destroy manhood. I believe that the thief who works, the drunkard who works, the liar who works, the adulterer who works, may often be a better man than the boneless, bloodless idler who is neither thief, drunkard, liar, or adulterer.

Work—all work—has in it a fine spiritual element, just as the smallest and meanest thing in the world has a divine side, inasmuch as God made it and saw that it was good. All temporary forms, it has been said, include essences that are eternal. Whatever be the meanness and loneliness of a man’s occupation, he may discharge it on principles common to himself and the Archangel Gabriel. The man who spends his whole life in cleaning codfish in Leadenhall Market is a better and finer man in the eye of God, a worthier and more valuable man to the Commonwealth, than the poor man who loafs away his life in a four-ale bar, or the rich one who lounges through his existence in a palace.

However far I may go in my belief that idleness is the greatest vice of all, hardly any one here would attempt to combat the general view that it is a vice and a very bad one.

But leaving the purely moral standpoint for a moment, let me point out to you the value of work as an aid to *material* success and happiness.

For a moment we will put aside the fact that toil is a virtue and laziness a sin. Let me briefly repeat what has been said a thousand times by far abler and more important lips than mine—

Work pays.

In the spring of this year I was staying in the South of France with a friend who is a great employer of labour. He employs nearly 16,000 men. He told me that, quite unknown to every one, he has established a system of reports upon the work and ability of each separate man. His agents inform him that Jack Smith, whom he has never met and will never meet in this world, is a hard worker. The next promotion goes to Jack Smith.

Genius, the highest and rarest attribute of the human being, has been said to be “an infinite capacity for taking pains.” A capacity for work which is not infinite but finite, yet which is still strong and vigorous, ought always and in all circumstances to secure a livelihood and ensure respect. This is the very least that it should do. It may do much more. It may command success.

What was it but work that enabled Heyne of Gottingen, the son of a poor weaver, to become one of the greatest classical scholars; that enabled Akenside, the son of a butcher, to write *The Pleasures of the Imagination*; Arkwright, the barber, to become Sir Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning-jenny; Beattie, the school-master, to become Professor of Moral Philosophy; Prideaux to become the Bishop of Winchester from being the assistant in the kitchen at Exeter College; Edmund Saunders, the errand lad, to become Sir Edmund Saunders, Chief Justice of the King's Bench; Jonson, the common bricklayer, to become Ben Jonson the famous? Adrian VI. rose to his great fame as a scholar from being a poor lad in the streets, who, for want of other convenience, had to read by the lamps in the church porches; Parkes, the grocer's, and Davy, the apothecary's apprentice, became the two greatest chemical investigators of their age. What enabled Dr. Isaac Milner, Dean of Carlisle and Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, to rise from the humble position of a weaver; and White, who was also a weaver, to become Professor of Arabic at Oxford; Hunter, the cabinet-maker, to attain the first rank among anatomists? Incredible labour enabled Demosthenes to become the greatest orator of antiquity. *The Economy of Human Life* and *The Annual Register* were the production of Dodsley, who by labour raised himself from the position of a weaver and a footman. Labour enabled Falconer, the barber's son, to write his celebrated poem of *The Shipwreck*. The editor of *The Quarterly Review*, Gifford, somehow acquired the needed capability from being a cabin-boy and shoemaker's apprentice. Haydn, the son of a poor cartwright, became the eminent composer; Johnson, through sickness and poverty, rose to be the immortal linguist; Jeremy Taylor, a barber's son, ended as theologian and bishop; Barry, from a working mason, became the renowned painter. Dr. Livingstone attained his celebrity from being a "piecer" in a factory. Indeed, if we read the lives of distinguished men in any department, we find them celebrated for the amount of labour they could perform. There is no exception to this rule even in the military profession. Julius Cæsar, Cromwell, Washington, Napoleon, and Wellington, were all renowned as hard workers. We read how many days they could support the fatigues of a march; how many hours they spent in the field, in the cabinet, in the court; how many secretaries they kept employed; in short, how hard they worked. Superficial thinkers are ready to cry out, "Miracles!" Yes! but they are miracles of industry and of labour.

Great success came to these great workers I have enumerated, people who started life as working men. If they had lived to-day they would have achieved the same, though the task would have been a more difficult one. Men of this stamp cannot be crushed. But more ordinary men who have the capacity for hard work and are willing to do it, what shall we say of many of them in the year 1906? What shall we say of the thousands who want work and can't get it, of the Unemployed?

We must say just this—the Unemployed are the victims of the Unemployable, and all working men suffer to support the idle and worthless classes of the community.

Every one suffers, every one has to pay for the maintenance of the Unemployable. But the working man pays most and suffers most. Let me put it to the working men here to-night.

Out of every pound I earn I have to pay a shilling to the Government in income-tax. I call this hard, because every penny of my income is made by hard mental work. The parson and the doctor, the farmer, the lawyer, the author, are taxed exactly the same as the man who has not earned his income, but who has been left land or other property by his father. I work ten hours a day nearly every day of my life, and I only make nineteen shillings out of every pound I earn, while the man who has an income without working for it pays not a penny more. You are probably wondering what this has to do with your side of the question. You do not pay income-tax, you may say, it is only the people who make more than three pounds odd a week who have to pay this tax.

You are quite wrong if you think this. In proportion to your earnings, you pay, even here in this country, more than I do, more than the doctor, more than the farmer—more than almost any one, except the parson, who is always the most heavily taxed man in proportion to his means and his duties in the community. It is true that you don't get yellow papers "On His Majesty's Service" by the post demanding this or that sum. You don't get polite gentlemen calling for money, and backed up by the whole force of the British Constitution. You pay in other ways. Take the case of a farm labourer. The farmer rents his land from the original owner, and he makes as much as he can out of it. The farmer has to pay the Government a proportion of every shilling he makes. It stands to reason, therefore, that he can't afford to pay his labourers as much as he would were he himself less heavily taxed. And there are other ways in which the working man pays out of all proportion to his earnings. The working man who buys a pound of tea, a glass of beer, or an ounce of tobacco, pays exactly the same duty on these articles as people with ten times his income. I may buy a pound of tea at two shillings and the working man may not be able to pay more than a shilling. But that is merely a question of quality, and does not affect the argument. The working man with a very small income pays the same duty as the man with a much larger one.

The working man also pays other taxes, called rates, in his house-rent. They are not collected direct from him, they are collected from the landlord, who puts up the rent accordingly.

Therefore, although a superficial view would tend to show that the working man is without many of those burdens which fall upon the shoulders of larger earners, such a view would be utterly wrong.

I have still so much to say that I cannot go further into the economic aspect of the question. Detailed proof, abundant and overflowing, could be easily supplied. I have no time to do so now, I merely repeat the indubitable fact that the working man has to pay for the workhouses, the asylums, and the prisons; poor as he is, he must support the Unemployables.

In the workhouses, at any rate in the London unions, he must support them in a comparative luxury which he himself can by no means afford.

In one great workhouse, for example, we find that the finest butter, the best Irish bacon, the whitest bread, the most expensive cuts of beef are for the pauper. Outside the workhouse the working head of a family who is struggling to bring up his children in honourable independence has none of these luxuries. In place of the best butter, he and his family have the cheapest margarine or dripping; their bacon, if they have any, is bought in inferior scraps; their bread is of common description, and instead of costly cuts of beef, they too often have to content themselves with the cheapest form of food in London—fried fish. At no time have they too much of even this food. Yet, while they are existing in such pinching poverty, fighting their way from day to day and from hour to hour, an enormous tax is levied on them in the form of rates, to maintain in unnecessary comfort those who are living an idle and unprofitable life.

The contrast to the worker must seem poignant. On the one side of the workhouse gate are poverty and incessant misery, with insufficient food to eat. On the other side are warmth and light, complete freedom from care, and abundance of food to eat, with no necessity whatever to earn the day's food by labour. All the prizes are to the unfit; all the effort and misery are to the laborious. If the honourable working man loses his employment through some change in industrial organization or through the growth of foreign competition, he finds it too often impossible to struggle back to his feet. He sees the help which might have carried him through his misfortune diverted by the blatant outcries of the worthless. He must be content to suffer and die in proud silence, while those who have never done or wished to do an honest day's work absorb the contributions of public and private charity.

Mr. McKenzie, to whom I am indebted for so many illuminating facts, completes the picture in a few vivid paragraphs. He takes the huge and poverty-stricken London district of Poplar for his text, and he tells us—

> "Had the Poplar poor law authorities contented themselves with dealing adequately with the old and the sick, and the maimed who are among them, all their resources would have been taxed, for the district is now very, very poor. They went further. They deliberately attracted to themselves the great shifting army of loafers and of idlers from all parts of London.
>
> "How has this been done? By two means. Outdoor relief has been freely granted to all kinds of folk, and the people inside the workhouse have been treated in a sumptuous manner far above the style of their class.
>
> "The guardians decided that the stone-yard is derogatory, and abolished the labour test. They had no sufficient labour for men, so they allow them to remain in practical idleness. There are over two hundred and fifty young men in the workhouse to-day, amply fed, well clothed, and maintained week by week, and month by month, in idleness. They are lazy, good-for-nothing scamps, many of them, as their records clearly show. Naturally they take advantage of the glorious prospect of plenty to eat and nothing to do. There is another army, only less numerous, of young women in the prime of years and of health, equally idle.
>
> "A few days since, I went over the 'workhouse' at midday, and watched the great rooms packed with legal idlers, all busy eating a dinner such as few labourers outside have. 'Do you mean seriously to tell me that these men have no proper employment?' I asked my guide, as we stood in a great room thronged with not far short of three hundred men, mostly varying in age from eighteen to forty, all sound limbed, all physically fit. 'We use them as far as we can in cleaning up,' my informant replied.
>
> "The next extraordinary point at Poplar is the feeding of the inmates. No one denies that the pauper should have a sufficiency of wholesome food, and most of us would willingly support the generous feeding of the old and the infirm. But the Poplar guardians have gone to the extreme here. They work on the policy avowed by some of them that 'the poor man ought to have the best sometimes.' They are going to give him the best when he is in the workhouse, and they do! The butter costs, bought by the ton, 1*s.* 2-3/4*d.* a pound. I am informed that the contractors are required to supply only 'Denny's best Irish' bacon. The meat is of the very finest quality to be bought, and the bread is of a grade and perfection rarely to be had in shops or restaurants. I examined the dinners being served in the course of an ordinary visit, and I declare in sober truth that the quality was at least as high as that given in an average West End club. The mealy potatoes and the fine boiled meats certainly equal those served in the modest club where I lunch."

This, my working-men listeners, is what you and I are paying for. The obvious result upon any district where the rates must be raised to an impossible height in order to support the idle and worthless, is that such a district ceases to be an area of employment.

The great manufacturing firms decline to continue their operations in a place where local taxation is so heavy that it prevents them from paying a dividend to their shareholders.

The firms go, but their labourers do not go with them. These, after a brief struggle, swell the ranks of the Unemployed, that sorrowful army for which the Government has just voted £200,000 as a small temporary relief.

Now I do not think that I need say much more as to the manner in which the Unemployables have created the class of the Unemployed, and as to how the working man suffers. I have given a brief summary enough—in the endeavour to be as thorough as possible—but it is already somewhat lengthy.

I wish to come at once to the principal point of this lecture—*the remedy for it all*!

I am personally convinced that the remedy I am about to propound is the only satisfactory one, and the object

of my presence here to-night is to outline it for you.

There is a time in the history of certain diseases when any malignant growth must be removed with the knife. Cancer, the tiger of all physical ills, can only be treated in this way. The hideous thing which has fastened on the human body must be cut away from it, or the body dies. The gentle measures of medicine and diet are useless. Life must be preserved by the scalpel and knife of the surgeon. “Is there no other way, doctor?” the nervous patient asks. “Don’t you think that I might get well if I kept on the Chian Turpentine treatment or the injection of Tryptic Ferment?”

The surgeon of to-day who knows his business will answer “No.” He will proceed to the stern though inevitable operation.

And that is what we have got to do in regard to this social cancer, this economic disease of the Unemployed question. We must stop the whole thing. You working men have the power to do it, and this is the way in which you must do it.

In the first place, you must realize your own power over the councils of the nation, in the ordering and determining of the laws of England. You who are working men are already beginning to do this. To take only one instance, the Trades Unions have already combined to send a number of labour members to Parliament, and a working man holds a high ministerial position with conspicuous honesty and ability. I don’t in the least agree with most of the aims of what is known as the Labour Party. My reading, education, and experience have taught me that Socialism is the dream of an impossibility, and that the witness of history, the experience of nations, and the laws of God are all hostile to it alike. There has never yet been a continuing Commonwealth in which all men were equal inasmuch as they were State officials. There never will be.

But working men have now the power to remedy the unjust conditions under which they live. The more they realize that power the more able will they be to bring about the change.

One of the first things that they must do is to relieve themselves and others of the burden of the Unemployables—this is the way in which I believe it can be done.

We must follow the plan adopted with signal success by Germany, Denmark, Belgium, and other foreign countries, only, in proportion as our own problem is more menacing and acute than in other States, we must adapt, amplify, and extend their plan to our needs. In these countries every effort is made to assist the deserving poor, while the undeserving are not merely repelled; they are also punished. Relief is given, after a careful visitation of the distressed case and thorough personal inquiry, in the shape of a loan, and repayment of the loan is required except in cases where the assisted are not able-bodied. The lazy and worthless are relegated to labour colonies, or to penal workhouses, whence they can return to ordinary life after a term of labour has been served. The old are cared for, when deserving, in a different kind of workhouse, and receive indulgent treatment. In this way sturdiness and independence of character are assured, and there is no danger of the excessive multiplication of paupers, or of enormous expenditure on relief.

This is speaking generally. The two chief agencies for dealing with the Unemployed question are the systems of insurance against unemployment and the establishment of labour colonies in which the Unemployables are forced to work.

It is impossible for me to-night to do more than sketch the working of these two institutions in a single country. I will, therefore, outline the method of insurance adopted in Germany, and give an account of the greatest labour colony in existence—that of Merxplas in Belgium.

A month or two ago I was in the great German city of Cologne. There I found the following system in operation:—

“The ‘City of Cologne Office for Insurance against Unemployment in Winter’ was established in 1896. The object of the office is to provide, with the assistance of the Cologne Labour Registry, an insurance against unemployment during the winter (December to March) for the benefit of male workpeople in the Cologne district. In order to insure with the office, a man must be at least eighteen years of age, must have lived for at least a year in Cologne, and must not suffer from permanent incapacity to work. He is required to pay a weekly premium, payment of which must commence as from April 1, and must continue for thirty-four weeks.

“The amount of the premium was originally 3*d.* per week for both skilled and unskilled workmen; in 1901 the rate of premium was fixed at 3*d.* for unskilled and 4-1/4*d.* for skilled men; in 1903 the rate was raised to 3-1/2*d.* per week for unskilled and 4-3/4*d.* per week for skilled workmen. In no case must a man be more than four weeks late in paying his weekly premium, otherwise he loses all claim upon the office; but in special cases the operation of this rule may be suspended by the committee of the insured.

“In return for these payments the insured workman, if and when out of work in the period named above, receives, for not more than eight weeks in all, a daily amount, which is 2*s.* for each of the first twenty days (nothing being paid for Sundays), and then 1*s.* on each subsequent day. These payments begin on the third week-day after the date on which the man has reported himself as out of work.

“While out of work, a man must report himself to the office twice daily, and if work is offered him, he must take it, provided that the nature of the employment and the rate of pay be, so far as practicable, similar to what the man had been getting while in work. But he cannot be asked to fill a place left vacant in consequence of a trade dispute. Unmarried men, with no dependants living at Cologne, are required to take work away from that city, if offered to them, their fares being paid for them.

“No money is paid in respect of unemployment caused by illness or infirmity, or by the man’s own fault, or by a trade dispute.

“The administration of the affairs of this Insurance Office is in the hands of the Executive Committee, the Committee of the Insured, and the General Meeting of Members.

“The Executive Committee consists of the head of the Cologne Municipality (*Oberbürgermeister*) or his delegate, of the President for the time being of the Cologne Labour Registry, and of twenty-four members, twelve elected by the insured workmen, and twelve patrons or honorary members (six employers and six employees) chosen by the patrons and honorary members.

“The twelve representatives of the insured on the Executive Committee, together with the business manager of the office, form the Committee of the Insured, referred to above.

“The Executive Committee has the right to decline to make any further insurance contracts, should it become doubtful whether the fund is adequate to meet further liabilities; and on two occasions (in 1901-2 and 1902-3) it became necessary to suspend operations in this manner.”

What an excellent plan this is! The working man has, I know, his sick club, his benefit society, to which he must subscribe. If he is a member of a Trades Union there again is another claim upon his purse. But all working men are not members of Trades Unions. The greater the skill of the trained mechanic, for example, the more the disfavour with which he regards the Trades Unions. It is a splendid thing to be a member of a great and powerful organization which has for its object to ensure that every man shall be paid a living wage. But when a Union forces all its members to a dead level of equality with that of the least skilled, when the good workman is compelled to do no more work, and no better work, than the worst workman in the confederation, then the good workman very naturally takes his name off the books. Once more, many working men, especially in the country, are fairly sure of always being able to obtain work if they are prepared to do it. But in the great, crowded, competitive centres of England, the uncertainty of regular employment, especially in regard to unskilled labour, the establishment of such a system of insurance would be of incalculable benefit, nor do I believe that the infinitesimal premium would be regretted or missed by any sensible and hard-working man.

You may object that probably the funds of the insurance companies might possibly come to be diverted to the support and assistance of the *won’t* works—the Unemployables. Please hear me to the end and you will see that this objection cannot be upheld.

I do not appeal to the experience of despotic Germany but of democratic Belgium when I describe the largest Continental Labour Colony, that of Merxplas in Belgium. During the present year I have spent some months in Belgium, and have been enabled to gather the opinions of all sorts of people upon the subject. Every thinking man I have consulted in this country is emphatic in his praise of the institution.

The Law of November 27, 1891, “for the repression of vagrancy and begging,” which came into operation on January, 4, 1892, imposed upon the Belgian Government the duty of organizing correctional establishments to be called (A) Beggars’ Depôts, (B) Houses of Refuge, and (C) Reformatory Schools. The Labour Colonies are maintained in order to fulfil the requirements of the Law under (A) and (B).

All persons confined in a Beggars’ Depôt or in a House of Refuge, not suffering from incapacity, are to be put to work of such nature as may be prescribed, and shall, unless deprived thereof as a measure of discipline, receive a daily wage, part of which shall be kept in hand and credited to the “leaving fund” of the inmate in respect of whose labour the same shall be paid.

The Minister of Justice fixes, with respect to the Beggars’ Depôts and Houses of Refuge, the rate of wage which the inmates shall receive, and the deductions to be retained out of this wage towards the “leaving fund.” This fund is handed over partly in the shape of cash, partly in that of clothing and tools, when the inmate is discharged.

The internal regulations of the Beggars’ Depôts and Houses of Refuge are settled by Royal Decree. Any person confined in either class of institution may be ordered to undergo solitary confinement.

The classes of persons whom the magistrates are directed (by Article 13 of the Law) to send to be confined in a Beggars’ Depôt, are all persons not suffering from incapacity, who instead of providing themselves with the means of existence by labour, abuse the charity of the public by habitual mendicancy; those persons who, through laziness, or drunken or immoral habits, pass their lives in vagrancy, and those who live on the earnings of vice (*souteneurs de filles publiques*).

Merxplas is reached from Antwerp by a steam tramway running through a cultivated country with occasional stretches of pine plantations. There are only a few villages, all small, and there is no place which can be in any way styled a town on the way to Merxplas, or indeed, within a considerable radius round the colony. The surrounding country is sandy heath, with pine plantations, but this is transformed at Merxplas by the manual labour of the colonists into excellent agricultural land, with fields and gardens neatly cultivated and well-grown avenues of oak, poplar, and pines. Such a transformation has been rendered more easy by the nature of the sub-soil, which is clay everywhere underlying the top-soil of sand. The buildings are large and handsome, and of good design. They seem excellently built. The main block consists of a large quadrangle, and is entered by a principal gate on the western side. The offices of administration are centred round this gate, with dining-halls capable of seating 1500 colonists at a time, on the left, and reception-rooms, baths, fire-engine house, etc., on the right. The *uartier cellulaire* as the prison for refractory colonists is named, is easily marked by the exercise grounds. To this is attached on one side a barracks for 150 soldiers and on the

other a building set apart for the *immoraux*.

The east side, opposite to the main gate, is occupied by the hospital in the centre, and by two wings on each side for the *infirmes*, who are still capable of light work, and for the *incurables*, who are unfit for any kind of labour. The remaining side on the north consists of four long galleries, *chauffoirs*, which are intended for the use of the colonists in inclement weather. Between these, placed centrally, are the lavatories and the canteen. There also is a library, from which they can obtain books on Sunday, in which at the time of our visit a tramp choir was practising with considerable skill under a tramp organist, and without any supervision.

The dormitories are four large buildings on the west front flanking the approach to the main gate, and beyond these lies the large new church which the colonists have just erected. This will hold 1500 men standing, and is a very effective building. Adjoining are the farm-buildings, which are nearly all on a very lavish scale, and thoroughly modern in construction. To the northward are the workshops. All these also are admirably built, and are thoroughly suited to their purposes. Beyond these lie the brickyards, stoneyards, pottery works, tannery, cement yard, etc.

The inmates are divided into six classes—

Class I. Men sentenced for offences against morality and for arson.

Class II. Men sentenced to Colony life as a sequel to a term of imprisonment of less than one year.

Men whose past history shows them to be dangerous to the community.

Class III. Habitual vagabonds, mendicants, inebriates, and men generally unable to support themselves.

Class IV. Men under twenty-one years of age.

Class V. (*a*) The infirm and (*b*) the incurable.

Class VI. First offenders.

These come under the normal conditions of Colony life; that is to say, they are obliged to do about nine hours work a day, of a character suited to their capacity, in return for which they receive board and lodging, and in addition, a small amount of pay.... This is partly paid in tokens valid only at the Colony stores and canteen, and partly it is banked against the time when the colonist leaves. The normal day is as follows: the colonists rise at 4.30 (summer), and after leaving the lavatory each man receives his ration of bread for the day (1-1/2 lbs.) and as much coffee (chicory) as he likes. What bread is not eaten then is kept for dinner and supper. At 6 they enter the shops, where they remain until 11.30, with a half-hour interval from 8 to 8.30 a.m., when they can go outside and smoke. At 11.30 they are all marched back to the quadrangle and go into the dining-halls in two relays. After this they rest until 1.30, when they re-enter the shops until 6, with another half-hour interval at 4 o’clock. On their return supper is served, and immediately afterwards they go to bed, when the roll-call is made, requiring every man to stand to his bed, and those missing are noted.

In the winter the short day necessitates the farmhands retiring very early to bed. Those who work in the shops begin their work at 7.30 in the morning, and work on after dusk by artificial light.

The colonists are given no meat, but the soup of vegetables is very good, and each man has a large quantity. They have a sweet drink made of liquorice-wood boiled in water, with their meals; coffee and bread for breakfast; potatoes or other vegetables, with a meat sauce for supper; and chicory-water in large cans in their dormitories. To supplement the above they can make purchases from the canteen of beer, tobaccos, lard, herrings, etc., which are sold at exceedingly small prices, representing only the actual cost price of the article when produced by the Colony labour itself.

The staff is small, and consists of a Director-in-Chief at Hoogstraeten, who exercises a general financial supervision over all the Colonies, a Director at Wortel and Merxplas, and at the latter place the following officers: Deputy-Directors, 2; Doctor, 1; Priests, 2; Teachers, 5; Clerks, 19; Manufacturing Manager, 1; Warders, 81; Sisters of Mercy, 6.

All offences against the regulations of the Colony and all cases of slack work are summarily dealt with by the Director, who has full power to transfer men from one class to another, and from a more to a less remunerative form of work. He can also award imprisonment or solitary confinement, and bread and water diet in the Colony cells for any period up to sixty days at a time. This power can also, in case of necessity, be used repeatedly, so that a bad character can practically be permanently locked up.

A further help to the maintenance of discipline is undoubtedly the privilege of earning wages and of spending them directly on beer and tobacco, etc.

There is one feature of Merxplas which is at first rather startling; that is, that every day there are a certain

number who escape. This does not seem to give the authorities much concern, because they are nearly always brought back again in a short time, either through capture, or because their mode of living brings them again to the notice of the police.

A beginning was once made of digging a moat round the grounds, but it was abandoned because it was thought that the possibility of escape helped to prevent disaffection. The colonists also, in the eyes of the law, are patients rather than criminals. Those in Classes I. and II. are, of course, much more closely guarded. Escape, like all other breaches of Colony discipline, can be punished by the Director with imprisonment in the Colony cells.

The results of the work done at the Colony is thus summed up in the “Blue Book” from which the greater part of the detailed particulars have been taken.

“Even more important than the economy of the system is its effect on the colonists. The men at Merxplas have retained a large proportion of whatever manual and technical skill they possessed when they first began to slip out of employment in the outside world. They have entered the Colony before the rapid deterioration, which is the inevitable result of the tramp life, has had time to take effect, and the opportunity afforded them to practise their trades has, in most cases, prevented their ever sinking to the level of the average English tramp. In every shop the keen interest the men take in their work is most noticeable; only one foreman and one warder are employed in each shop, and without coercion the men seemed all working with remarkable energy and real interest. This is, in our opinion, perhaps the most striking feature of the whole establishment.

“The permanent effect on the individual is less, perhaps, than one would at first sight expect. About ninety per cent are habituals. The reason given by all the authorities was always the same. Outside, this class of man of weak moral fibre, and generally of inferior physique, cannot keep from drink. Sooner or later he breaks down, loses his place and returns. Inside, away from temptation, they work well, and as long as the sentence does not exceed two or three years, seem content to remain. The colonies, it must be remembered, do not claim to deal largely with the temporarily unemployed, but with a class that is more or less permanently inefficient. In this connection, however, it seems that no attempt has been made to bring any strong religious influence to bear. There are the usual masses and other observances of the Roman Church, but there seems to be little personal mission work undertaken.”

I come to my remedy.

As I see it, what we have to do is this—we must establish colonies in which the Unemployables shall spend their lives. When once a man has been proved to be irreclaimable by ordinary methods, when a properly established tribunal, after searching inquiry, has pronounced him a burden and a drag upon the community, then I would put him away for life, if he is irreclaimable, and continues to remain so.

I would make his life just as pleasant as he himself chose to make it. If he refused to work, then his lot should be a prison cell and bread and water until he did. If he made the best of the situation in which his own fault had placed him, he should be enabled to earn enough to keep him in considerable comfort, and to provide him with harmless and judicious pleasures.

Such a man should live in a state of almost freedom. The one thing denied him would be the privilege of mixing with the outside world and of reproducing his kind. Such gratifications and amusements as he had earned should be supplied him with no ungrudging hand. The consolations of religion should be always at his command and should be constantly brought before him.

But he should not be allowed to beget children who would swell the ranks of the Unemployable and increase the intolerable burden already carried by the honest working man. It is just about as certain as science and economic experience can make it, that the child of an Unemployable will become an Unemployable too. It is possible that one child in a thousand may turn out a decent citizen. That is about the maximum percentage, and if, for the sake of possibly producing one ordinary worker we ought to allow nine hundred and ninety-nine hopeless idlers to come into existence, then I have nothing more to say.

I do not think such a position can be maintained for a moment. I venture to think that you will agree with me.

I admit that such a method would be inhuman, immoral and unchristian, if we were to treat the hopeless social failure as a criminal pure and simple. Let us make his life as happy as he chooses to make it; treat him as a criminal if he won’t work in the colony, comfort and pet him if he will. But we need go no further than this. I do not honestly think that our duty as Christians or sociologists imposes more consideration upon us than just this. “If thine arm offend thee cut it off.”

Sir Robert Anderson, for many years Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, has long held the view that the professional criminal is not a necessity of civilization, and that a reform of the method of dealing with him would soon bring about his complete extinction. Sir Robert, with his extensive Scotland Yard experience behind him, declares that the number of high-class criminals in England does not exceed a few dozen, and that if these were got out of the way organized crime against property would cease. The plan which Sir Robert Anderson has conceived is that of providing asylums in place of the present prisons, where a man who has proved to have devoted his life to crime would be sent for life and made to earn his living.

We must provide asylums for the Unemployables also, in order to preserve ourselves. It is no use being sentimental. We must relegate social parasites to a state and condition where they can no longer infest the social body and cannot increase in numbers. When we have done this, when you working men have done this, in less than a generation the question of the Unemployed will be satisfactorily settled. It may well be, moreover, that such a method will change the least degraded Unemployables into honest, hard-working

citizens who can be once more admitted into the world on probation.

These are my opinions, and though I have given you but a sketch of them to-night, I submit that they are at least reasonable and worth consideration.

The words of the poet Shelley are no less applicable in the present than they were in the past. He had an unconquerable faith in the spiritual destiny of our race, and his lines, when he wrote his “song to the men of England” were filled with flame:—

> “The seed ye sow another reaps;
> The wealth ye find another keeps;
> The robes ye weave another wears;
> The arms ye forge another bears.
>
> Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap;
> Find wealth—let no impostor heap;
> Weave robes—let not the idle wear;
> Forge arms, in your defence to bear.”

AN AUTHOR’S POST-BAG

VII

AN AUTHOR’S POST-BAG

“You have the letters Cadmus gave”——

As I sit down to write this paper I am experiencing a quite novel sensation. Most of us like to talk about ourselves when any one will listen, and nearly all of us do so now and then. But to write about one’s self in the reasonable expectation that a large number of people, friends, enemies and those who are indifferent, will read what one has written, is curious. There have been times when an interviewer has come from a Magazine and I have found myself trying to explain my views, to answer questions that were put, with some degree of fluency, to do myself justice and yet not to be egotistical in a somewhat difficult situation. Knowing quite well what I wanted to say, and exactly how I wished to explain myself, I have listened to my words with a kind of embarrassed wonder at their inadequacy. “What an ass this fellow must be thinking me!” has been one’s continual thought. Then, when the interview appears, sometimes with pictures of “Mr. Guy Thorne at his desk,” “the dining-room,” “shooting upon the moor,” one finds that the writer has made a nice smooth sequence of the conversation, just as the photographer has taken charming pictures of one’s carefully-arranged furniture. Yet one was rather prevented from really saying what one would have liked to say because of the interviewer’s presence as the medium who was to give the words to the public. This is a foolish self-consciousness, no doubt, but it is not easy to overcome. Now, and at this moment, there is no such restriction upon free speech. The snow is driving over the Dover cliffs, no sound penetrates to the ancient room in which I write, and for the first time in my life I am sitting down to talk of myself, as an author to his readers.

The essay has come to be written in this way. There were still some pages of this book to fill when last week, I was asked to open a bazaar in Dover. The vicar said a good many absurdly kind things about my stories when he introduced me to the people there, and afterwards I had to stand a continuous fire of questions for two hours. I could not understand, and I do not now understand, why any one should be interested in the *personal* explanations of a writer as to how he writes, what happens when he is writing, and so forth. I do not often go to a theatre, but when I do I never buy a programme. I don’t want to know the private name of the lady who plays Ophelia or the gentleman who is the Hamlet of the night. I pay my money in order that they shall be Hamlet and Ophelia to me, that I shall watch the agonies of a dark and troubled spirit, shall sigh over the tender fancies of an unhappy love-sick girl, and the more I am forced to realize that the gentleman is Mr. Jones, who was fined five pounds in the morning for driving his motor-car too fast, the less real he is as the Prince.

But, although this is my way of thinking, I am well aware it is not the general way; and as I have proved for myself that there is a demand for some sort of personal explanation, and as I endeavour to conduct my trade of writing upon common-sense principles, this essay is getting itself written.

Addison said that “So excessive is the egotism of the egotist that he makes himself the darling theme of contemplation; he admires and loves himself to that degree that he can talk of nothing else.” This is an obvious statement, and made with little of Mr. Secretary’s usual charm of style. But it is perfectly true. I beg leave to submit, however, that what I am doing here is not so much an act of egotism—egoism is the better word—but a legitimate statement for those, if there are any, who care to read it.

I have strong convictions upon certain points, and I endeavour to pack my stories with these convictions. That, by doing this, I please many readers who think as I do I am presently going to show, by quoting some of their letters which have reached me.

A novel is simply this: it is a certain portion of the lives of certain people imagined by the author and seen through his temperament. Very well then; let me proceed to prove that the modern nonsense which would have people believe that Christianity in fiction is *against the canons of art*, is simply a lie.

The life of every single human being in England is punctuated and impinged upon by Christianity. As I pointed out in my first essay, the usual modern novel never mentions—never even mentions!—Sunday. Yet on Sunday, the shops, factories, theatres and public-houses close. The drunkard has as much reason to find Sunday the most dismal day in the week as the saint to know it the happiest and best. For half-an-hour in every town and village the bells of church and chapel ring—if indeed chapels are “ritualistic” enough to have bells, a point upon which I am not informed!

And again, speaking of the constant reminder we all have of religion, every coin we have in our pockets bears the inscription REX FID. DEF.—our King is officially known as the Defender of the Christian Faith. Every day as I write, the newspapers are full of the controversy—the religious controversy—of the Education Bill. Each time you and I go to a concert we finish it with the music of the National Anthem, which is a prayer to God that he will bless and preserve the Dynasty. Is it necessary to multiply instances? I think not.

How can any one say, as the literary critics have sometimes said of my own books and of others much more important, that “religion” is out of place in a novel?

As I have pointed out at some length, the greatest novels are one and all permeated with the sense of religion. Take your Thackeray and read in *Vanity Fair* of George Osborne going out to battle and first saying “Our Father” with his wife. Read the works of this great writer and regard how, whenever a great emotion, a poignant situation occurs, so surely the author sends up a prayer to Almighty God either in his own person or that of his characters. In that almost greatest of English novels, Charles Reade’s *The Cloister and the Hearth*, the hero dies with the holy name of Jesus on his lips. There is religion in *Pickwick!*—we read of the Christmas of Dingley Dell. In *Les Misérables*, that huge epic novel, Victor Hugo has drawn more than one saint of God, has made Christianity the motive of his drama.

It *is* so in life, be certain that it is and always will be. Christianity is the central thing, the only important thing, and the attempt to minimize its importance and influence is as the chirping of a linnet on the roadside as some stately procession passes by.

> *They say. What say they? Let them say!*

But let no one be deluded into believing that the printed sneers of those who are afraid to recognize our Lord represent any real opinion, any weight of opinion, as to the public distaste to Christianity as an integral part of the fiction which they buy.

Sir Arthur Helps once said, “The influence of works of fiction is unbounded. Even the minds of well-informed people are more often stored with characters from acknowledged fiction than from history or biography, or the real life around them. We dispute about these characters as if they were realities. Their experience is our experience; we adopt their feelings and imitate their acts. Shakespeare’s Plays were the only history to the Duke of Marlborough. Thousands of Greeks acted under the influence of what Achilles or Ulysses did in Homer.”

All this is entirely true. As a young American novelist once put it to me, “To-day is the day of the novel.” In no other day and by no other vehicle is contemporaneous life so adequately expressed, and the critics of the twenty-second century, reviewing our times, striving to reconstruct our civilization, will look not to the painters, not to the architects nor dramatists, but to the novelists to find our idiosyncrasy.

This is by no means intended as an apologia for the sort of tales I write. I know that it is my duty to write them, the duty I owe to my own convictions, and however badly I write them I am doing my best. No, I am not apologizing for my point of view. I am only trying to suggest that even in my greatest artistic failures my artistic standpoint can’t be assailed. Any critic who says that because I write as a Christian and that *therefore (and for that reason only)* my books are inartistic, is wrong.

I have headed this article “An Author’s Post-Bag” et cetera. Probably you will be wondering when I am going to justify the title. I will begin to do so now.

Post-time is always a recurring wonder to me. The lowest classes of all, the people who don’t get letters, are incapable of experiencing more than a third of the sensations which the highly-organized life of our time has to offer us.

A novelist, and I have no reason to think that I am any exception to the rule, receives a very varied correspondence. The business side of his operations is more extensive than the layman would suppose. The writer whose output is regular and whose work is in demand has an almost daily letter to receive from his

agent. There is the question of a serial for this or that paper, an editor wants a short story, a publisher is writing impatient letters to the agent for a book that is overdue, “close times” for various books have to be arranged so that they do not clash between various publishers—he is confronted every day with an infinity of detail which even such an experienced and assiduous agent as I myself am fortunate to possess cannot save him.

When the business letters have been read, there is his own private correspondence, and then the great mass of communications from people whom one has never heard of and never seen. It is of these letters that I would speak, and of their varied appeals to one’s pocket, one’s vanity, the sense of gratitude and the feeling of anger.

As Cowper said, “None but an author knows an author’s cares,” and not the least of them is the number of letters he receives asking for money. There is a rooted idea in the general mind that fame and fortune come immediately a writer publishes his first book. A novelist is popularly supposed to be a man of affluence in the twentieth century, just as in the eighteenth century he was known to be a pauper. “All the vices of the gambler and of the beggar were blended with those of the author. The prizes in the wretched lottery of bookmaking were scarcely less ruinous than the blanks. If good fortune came, it came in such a manner that it was almost certain to be abused. After months of starvation and despair, a full third night or a well-received dedication filled the pocket of the lean, ragged, unwashed poet with guineas.... A week of taverns soon qualified him for another year of night cellars.” Well, we have progressed since then certainly. There are beds to sleep in, food to eat and fire upon the hearth for most of us. Nevertheless the ordinary novelist is nearly always a poor man, sometimes bitter poor. I *know* what I am talking about and there is not an author, agent or publisher who would not say the same. For the first book I ever wrote I received ten pounds, and this was paid in two instalments. Until four years ago thirty pounds was the largest sum I had received for a long novel.

The word “royalty” has a fine sound. It is a purple word and opens vistas to the outsider of luxury and ease. Yet in its literary application it is the biggest humbug and liar of a word that ever masqueraded for what it is not. There are plenty of “royalties” that will not pay the third-class return fare between London and Penzance. A great personal friend of mine, a man of culture and real love of human event, wrote his first novel three years ago. He had something definite to say, knew how to say it, and had a first-rate plot. For months and months I saw him toiling lovingly at his novel. When it was written he found a publisher willing to produce it, and it duly appeared. In almost every case the reviews were extremely laudatory. Papers of position and weight praised it unreservedly, to all appearances the book was a definite success—a minor success, no doubt, but a success. From first to last his earnings realized five pounds, and neither he nor I have reason to believe that his publisher cheated him in the matter of sales. Here is the written testimony of what I say, given by an author who died after producing four or five really excellent and successful novels.

“Take, then, an unusually lucky instance, literally a novel whose success is extraordinary, a novel which has sold 2500 copies. I repeat that this is an extraordinary success. Not one book out of fifteen will do as well. But let us consider it. The author has worked upon it for—at the very least—six months. It is published. Twenty-five hundred copies are sold. Then the sale stops. And by the word stop one means cessation in the completest sense of the word. There are people—I know plenty of them—who suppose that when a book is spoken of as having stopped selling, a generality is intended, that merely a falling off of the initial demand has occurred. Error. When a book—a novel—stops selling, it stops with a definiteness of an engine when the fire goes out. It stops with a suddenness that is appalling, and thereafter not a copy, not one single, solitary copy is sold. And do not for an instant suppose that ever after the interest may be revived. A dead book can no more be resuscitated than a dead dog.

“But to go back. The 2500 have been sold. The extraordinary, the marvellous has been achieved. What does the author get out of it? A royalty of ten per cent. Eighty-three pounds six shillings and eightpence for six months’ hard work. Roughly less than £3 9*s.* 0*d.* a week. An expert carpenter will easily make much more than that, and the carpenter has infinitely the best of it in that he can keep the work up year in and year out, where the novelist must wait for a new idea, and the novel writer must then jockey and manœuvre for publication. Two novels a year is about as much as the writer can turn out and yet keep a marketable standard. Even admitting that both the novels sell 2500 copies there is only £166 13*s.* 4*d.* of profit. One may well ask the question: Is fiction writing a money-making profession?

“The astonishing thing about the affair is that a novel may make a veritable stir, almost a sensation, and yet fail to sell very largely.

“There is so-and-so’s book. Everywhere you go you hear about it. Your friends have read it. It is in demand at the libraries. You don’t pick up a paper that does not contain a review of the story in question. It is in the ‘Book of the Month’ column. It is even, even—the pinnacle of achievement—in that shining roster, the list of best sellers of the week.

“Why, of course, the author is growing rich! Ah, at last he has arrived! No doubt he will build a country house out of his royalties. Lucky fellow; one envies him.

“Catch him unawares and what is he doing? As like as not writing unsigned book reviews at thirty shillings a week in order to pay his lodging bill—and glad of the chance.”

This is absolutely and literally true.

Yet novelists are perhaps more pestered than any other people by requests for help. A writer who, like myself, can live in fair comfort by means of unceasing labour, but is not even a well-to-do man, to say nothing

of a “wealthy one,” receives innumerable letters to which he is quite unable to reply as the applicants would wish, but which are most distressing to read. At a time when I certainly had not a hundred pounds in the world, I received the following letter—of course I suppress the name and address.

> “—— Vicarage, “——shire.
>
> “My dear Sir,
>
> “Thank you a thousand times for *When it was Dark*. I am now looking forward to Friday, when your next book begins in the *Daily Mail*. I have been reading about you to-day and have taken courage to ask your help. You say ‘Let nothing disturb thee,’ etc. How can I help it in such trouble as mine. My husband has failed in health from years of hard work, and out of an income of *under* £200 a year we are paying a curate £100. At this moment we are in *extremes*. My boy is reading for Holy Orders, and we are in need of funds for his expenses. He has been two years a licensed lay reader, and is a thorough Catholic and has the highest testimonials. Will you help me in my need to-day with a donation. I can give references, and for any help I shall be so thankful. Please forgive me for troubling you.”

I have no doubt that this appeal is quite genuine, and a very poignant comment it is upon the way in which the priests of the Church of England are paid. This type of letter is not a pleasant one to receive when one is sitting down to work. The imagination with which one is endowed and by which one earns one’s bread, is not a faculty very easy to discipline or to control, and the power which should be devoted to the chapter one is engaged upon wanders away and constructs a picture of want and sorrow which one is quite powerless to alleviate.

Nor is it once or twice that such letters as this arrive. Here is a far more piteous document still, if it is genuine. I think that when you have read it you will agree with me that it is genuine enough. There is nothing of the ordinary begging letter about it; and if the writer could invent such a story, he ought not to be so hopelessly unable to earn a single halfpenny by his pen. It is to be observed also that in this case the writer wants work, not money.

> “London, N.
>
> “Dear Sir,
>
> “About two years ago I arrived in England from Australia, with the object of striving to gain a footing in literature, but so far have been unsuccessful. I have written two novels and numerous short stories and articles, but I have ever had them rejected, and all I can show for my work is a pile of publishers’ letters. My resources long since gave out, and I worked myself into the lowest poverty, and then I was prostrated by a long illness. Knowing, sir, that you have had much to do with journalistic work, I decided to write and ask you if you knew of any one in the city—or elsewhere—to whom you could refer me for some employment. I am practically destitute, and knowing no one in London makes it extremely difficult for me to get anything to do. About six months ago I was turned out of my lodgings owing to arrears of rent, and then I commenced tramping the country in the hope of getting work. I managed to get three weeks’ hop-picking, but nothing else, and so for a while I tramped aimlessly about, being exposed to all kinds of weather, sleeping in haystacks, or wherever else offered, until at last my health again gave way. It was then that I called on a well-known novelist, and he was very kind and assisted me, at the same time expressing a wish to see my works. They were sent for, and duly forwarded on to his agents, and I have been advised to write books for boys, the agent expressing his opinion that I would succeed in this, but as I am situated writing is out of the question. When I met this novelist my health failed utterly, and I was compelled to go into the infirmary for a while, and whilst there he wrote telling me to try and get some practice in journalistic work and to study for a while until I gained a little more experience.
>
> “I think he is out of England at present, but he gave me permission to use his letter as a reference if I needed it. Well, sir, I returned to London about a month ago, and managed to get a few days’ work envelope addressing at Morgan and Scott’s, in Paternoster Row, but so far I have been unable to find anything else to do. I am very anxious to get some work immediately, and if you could help me in this I should be indeed grateful. I care not of what nature the employment may be, manual or otherwise, if I can only get it at once.
>
> “Apologizing for troubling you,
>
> “I am,
> “Dear Sir,
> “Yours faithfully.”

Some time ago a drawing appeared in the *Daily Mail* of a Cornish cottage where I was then living. Within a week, by a curious coincidence, I received *three* water-colour drawings of the place, made from the sketch in the newspaper. Two were excellent, and accompanied by the kindest letters; they hang on my walls now. The third was by no means a work of art, to say the very least of it, and this letter came with it:—

> “North Kensington.
>
> “I am sending you a copy of the cottage I have painted from the sketch in the *Daily Mail* of November 16 last, if you will accept it.

> “I must explain that I am only a very poor hand at such work. The fact of the matter is that through much *illness* and *lost trade* that I am left very *badly off*, and seeing the sketch and account of your work, thought perhaps if I could paint a few copies and you would introduce the matter to your many friends I could sell some to them, which would assist me to earn something, my health being bad and getting on to seventy years of age it is not much I can do. You will understand that I do not know anything of the appearance of the country around the cottage. I have not been in that part, so all I have put in is imaginary. Will you please say what you think to it, and how much you think I could sell them for. I have not means to buy canvas so have painted on card. Your kind assistance in this matter will great oblige
>
> “Yours truly.”

I have quoted but three letters from a vast pile of others. “Que vivre est difficile ô mon cœur fatigué!” says the French poet, and nobody knows it better than the English novelist. But with the best will in the world we cannot help everybody. Charity begins at home, its sun rises there and should set abroad, but it is limited by the purse of the giver. Among all the contents of his post-bag such letters are the most distressing to the author, and add enormously to a difficult and often very thankless task.

But such letters as these and all worries *ejusdem generis* are, after all, only a small portion of my post-bag. During the last year or two I have received hundreds and hundreds of letters from all parts of the world—letters which have given me inexpressible happiness. I think I may be forgiven for quoting some of them here. The real reward of an author’s labours lies in the sympathy and appreciation of his readers, and in that alone. When, moreover, a writer works with a definite object in view, the purpose of leading others to believe what he himself believes, such letters are indeed a strong stay and holdfast which console for any amount of misrepresentation and bring a veritable oil of joy for mourning.

A priest writes:—

> “Sir
>
> “I don’t ask you because I know you will pardon a stranger for addressing you, and I shall not say much. And the little I mean to say I hardly know how to express. Some few years ago I was a vicar in——. Now I am sick in body and soul. I had lost all my faith, but I have been reading *Made in His Image*, and to-day I prayed for the first time for more than a year, and tears came, and I don’t know if you heard my voice calling to you.
>
> “I should like to see you. *Can it be?*
>
> “Yours,
> “De Profundis.”

A gentleman from Hull tells me:—

> “Dear Sir,
>
> “You will please pardon the intrusion of this letter. I am a Sunday School teacher, and have been a Christian for three years.
>
> “A month ago, as a result of reading the *Clarion* and Haeckel, I became disturbed in my mind, and wished to resign my class. I sought the assistance of my minister. Instead of answering my doubts himself he placed a copy of *When it was Dark* in my hand, telling me to read it prayerfully, and go to him again. The following evening I completed the reading of a book whose influence will live with me. My dear sir, I feel I cannot thank you half enough, and I shall never cease to thank God that the book was written.
>
> “I saw my minister, not with any doubts this time, but with my faith renewed, and with a fixed determination to work harder for my Divine Master.
>
> “I expect you will receive many letters expressing thanks, but I cannot refrain from adding my humble testimony.
>
> “Allow me to remain, sir,
>
> “Yours very faithfully.”

And here is another kind letter from Bridgewater, again from a man:—

> “Dear ‘Mr. Thorne,’
>
> “Will you please accept my best thanks for your book, *When it was Dark*. I started to read it as one distinctly prejudiced against it, but I finished the last page saying, ‘It is wonderful.’ I only wish that those who condemn it would read it for themselves and see the forcible manner in which you have depicted what the world would be if the Resurrection was a myth. Faith cannot but be strengthened by reading it, and the coming Eastertide will be more real to me through having read *When it was Dark*.
>
> “Wishing you every success and happiness.”

From Brantford in far-away Canada this letter reaches me:—

> "Dear Sir and Friend,
>
> "After reading your splendid edition, *When it was Dark*, I take this manner in addressing. The book impressed me very greatly from start to finish, and it always will be henceforth a great pleasure, and I am sure a great help, to read your publications. We greatly need in this world to-day good strong men who will set forth their thoughts in a fearless manner. This is in a very large measure the way the book appealed to me.
>
> "It is with a great deal of sincere pleasure I note in the—— Magazine (which publication is in our home) for a coming issue the beginning of one of Guy Thorne's stories. The writer is a young man of twenty years and a Methodist, and presume I am taking up too much of a good man's time. But I might say my idea in writing was to convey from a Canadian my thanks for the good which I have received, and many others in our city, from the reading of this one work.
>
> "Wishing you every success in your work,
>
> "Yours sincerely."

From Brixton:—

> "Dear Sir,
>
> "Among the shoals of letters which doubtless you now receive may I place this, so that I may thank you for the invaluable work which you are doing in writing your novels.
>
> "The article in to-day's *Daily Mail* shows me that you have grasped the ideal which I have tried to attain since my teens (three years).
>
> "I am one of the lonely digits in 'diggins,' who either fall or rise, according to the company they keep. I have thus found that religion is to man what the rudder is to the crew of a ship.
>
> "I have regularly attended church since my exile, and delight to hear the beautiful service of the English Church. Are they not precious words and inspiring. The service effectually clears me of that ugly black cloak of worldliness which clings to me during the working days.
>
> "This, I believe, is the lesson which you are engraving so well on the minds of all people.
>
> "I conclude with the wish that your pen will ever respond to the spirit which now animates you."

Again from a far country, this time near East Guzna, W. Tarsus, Cilicia:—

> "My Dear Sir,
>
> "For weeks I have wanted to write and thank you for your book, *When it was Dark*, but I have been laid aside with fever. It stirs thousands of us, and you must feel thankful as you look round to see the success which is granted you in drawing people to ponder upon subjects of such weight. You will like to know that I have spread your book right and left in Cyprus, having obtained three copies, one of which I sent to a Judge.
>
> "Your account of the ride to Nablous is a vivid word picture, and you must, I think, be familiar with the East.
>
> "May I say that I find a dignity and vivacity in your book, dealing as you do with so solemn and glorious a subject as our Lord's Resurrection, which I firmly hold, and have been accustomed to put in the forefront of my teaching as missionary both in Australia and Russia.
>
> "At present my work lies in Cyprus, where I find good opportunities of helping on friendliness with the Greek Church.
>
> "I am now on holiday, and have just given away my last copy of *When it was Dark* while staying in the Carmelite Monastery at Haiffa, with those charming French Pères, to an American canon who was also there.
>
> "Sir, what I want to do is to suggest that you should have your book translated into French and German. I lent it to a French engineer a month ago, and I feel sure it would do good in those countries. Think this out. You might take the advice of some competent friend.
>
> "I should like to do the translating myself, but I should make so many mistakes, *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit*.
>
> "Have sent home for *A Lost Cause*, and am expecting another treat, with some salt of sarcasm.
>
> "With sincere respect and gratitude."

My kind correspondent's idea has been carried out, I am glad to say. The book in question has been translated into French and German and several other languages. And in this regard I may perhaps mention the surprise I have felt on learning that the French issue has already gone into three editions. I am in France

a good deal each year, and know something of the temper of the reading public there to-day. I had not thought that many people would read the book.

From San Remo, in Italy, this letter comes:—

> "Dear Sir,
>
> "I read last week *When it was Dark* and wish each of my children to have a copy, as it will show them what the Christian Faith means to the world. I still hold to the simple faith of my childhood taught me by my dear parents, which carried each through a *peaceful death-bed*. Our Heavenly Father, the King of kings and the only Ruler of princes, sacrificed His beloved Son for His people, and allowed His cruel death, knowing that in the future the thought of His terrible sufferings would touch the hearts of most and often keep them from sinning. I have never doubted *His Resurrection*, neither would I allow any person to suggest that doubt in my presence. And to me the convincing proof that He was indeed the Son of God is, that He rose again from the dead, He ascended to Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of His Father—God only could possess this power. How very lax we are apt to become and take as our due that great sacrifice.
>
> "I send to Mr. Guy Thorne my little testimony and best wishes, as I cannot thank him personally for *reminding me so fully* how dark it would indeed be for us all had we not our beloved Saviour always ready and willing to intercede with His Holy Father for us poor erring mortals. Some one said to me, of course Guy Thorne makes a good thing out of his book. I replied, certainly, it is his due to be paid for the labour of his brain, and in this case he fully deserves it, as he might have written a book leading many farther away instead of bringing them nearer to the Cross. Also the interesting style of *When it was Dark* will induce many to read it. Whereas, if it were very dry, none of us would wade half through."

An old clergyman in Wales writes thus:—

> "Rectory, Brecon.
>
> "Dear Sir,
>
> "I am seventy; at seventeen I had read more novels and other literature than nine out of ten lads of my age. For years past I can't read novels. My daughters sometimes induce me to start one, but after a couple of chapters I throw it on one side feeling strongly inclined to exclaim with Conan Doyle's school-boy, 'Rot.'
>
> "After reading the *Life of Father Dolling*, one of my married daughters brought me *When it was Dark*, which I promised to read, and enjoyed it very much. My wife *devoured* it.
>
> "This won't interest you very much, but the following fact may. A few days after finishing your book our rural post-messenger—an old army man—we live quite in the country—came to me, quite confidentially, and said he had a book he was quite sure I should enjoy; he produced it—it was *When it was Dark!* Poor fellow! he seemed so disappointed when he found I had read it. A fortnight ago an Irish lady and her daughter stayed with us. They were *good church women*. They left me a book for perusal. It is *A Lost Cause*. I have read it and enjoyed it. It reminds me of Father Dolling and Kensit and Son.
>
> "I hope you will give us many more. We want Catholic truth placed before people in an attractive dress. We want to break down the great wall of Protestant ignorance and prejudice. Your books are doing this.
>
> "Don't heed letters in the Daily Press. I saw a letter in the *Daily Mail*. These letters are only a proof that your books are *telling*. Go straight forward and may every success and blessing attend your efforts. This is the earnest wish of
>
> "Yours truly."

I was intensely interested to receive this letter from India:—

> "—— Mission, "Madras, "South India.
>
> "Dear Sir,
>
> "As you are not unwilling to receive letters from strangers, perhaps this from a distant land might not be unacceptable to you. I am a missionary and have not read two novels during the last five years (but thousands before then), but a friend of mine having read your *When it was Dark* persuaded me to read it.
>
> "I was greatly interested in the first few pages describing the scenes of my birth and young manhood. I suppose Walktown is meant for ——, if so, I was born in that part of Salford, and although I belonged to St. —— Church, I attended very frequently St. —— as the senior church of the district.
>
> "I enclose an account of my conversion which will no doubt interest you. I have thought many a time that it would be an admirable theme for a novel. There are many other incidents in my life that would lend interest, especially my association with some of the most notorious anarchists of

England and the Continent, and America, I was also a journalist on the *Clarion*, and a bosom friend of Robert Blatchford for fourteen years, John Burns, the new Cabinet Minister, slept at my house when he was an unemployed mechanic in 1885. I was personally acquainted with Mrs. Annie Besant for many years, and now she is here in Madras, the head-quarters of the Theosophical Society. I have renewed my acquaintance with her.

"I have come to think that much good might be done by treating of sacred subjects in the form that you have done, as you can by this means reach the minds and souls of those millions whom the Church cannot reach.

"The University here is turning out educated Hindus who, having parted with their heathenism have taken up Western scepticism in its place, and our Christian Missionaries are helpless to avert it, the youth here are swamped by the cheap Rationalist reprints. Could we but supply them with novels of Western life showing up the folly of Haeckel, Blatchford, Spencer and Co., in the manner you have done, it would be a powerful counter-attraction.

"Yours in Him we love.

"P.S.—The British people also need a novel that will show up 'Blatchfordism,' and you now have the ear of the reading public."

It is curious that in many of the letters I receive Mr. Robert Blatchford's name is mentioned. With some minds his writings have great power and influence, probably I imagine because of their real sincerity of purpose. It is the more cheering to know that an honest effort to render the Incarnation increasingly credible to the man in the street is not without reward. It is as difficult for me to disbelieve in the fact that Christ was God as it is difficult for Mr. Blatchford to believe it. Where one man sees a landscape the other sees only a map. But there are, nevertheless, a great many people who deny the Catholic Faith because, while they desire to retain the name of Christians, they are unwilling to accept the obligations of Christianity. And while looking about for something to believe, a necessity of the human soul, they either find it in Mrs. Eddy and other false prophets, or finally join issue with the editor of the *Clarion*.

An author's letter-bag is always full of surprises, and such a correspondence as I am privileged to receive often entails a vast amount of extra work. But it is almost impossible not to reply to at least two-thirds of the letters that reach one, and though reply sometimes leads to a lengthy interchange of letters all are helpful and encourage one to continue, while some are full of the most illuminating suggestions.

Of this the following letter from one of the Canons of Durham Cathedral is a typical example:—

"Dear Sir,

"In your coming story I hope you will lay stress on the fact that our 'higher' education is practically a Pagan one. All University honours, fellowships, scholarships, prizes are for proficients in Pagan literature; interesting (for some people). Beautiful in language as this literature is, it lacks the spirit and power of the Christian Faith. The common rooms smell of Plato and Aristotle. There is no cross in a Don's life, as such, though a few rise above the normal standard.

"This system filters through the public schools down to the smallest private schools, in most of which the daily bread, the upholding of Christ as Saviour, teacher, master, example and king is left out.

"At Eton, where I was myself, religious teaching did not exist. We had Sunday questions of which one specimen will suffice, given to my nephew the other day.

"'Of what judge is a curious incident recorded and what was the incident?' The result of this is far-reaching and deplorable.

"In Parliament the members assemble by troops to hear about some personal scandal, but when the happiness of English girlhood is in question there is hardly a 'house.' And so with other questions that concern the personal holiness and happiness of our men and women and children.

"Forgive me for this taking up of your time, but your pen may do what I feel myself unable to do."

I have received a good many letters from clergymen endorsing the views I expressed in my book called *First it was Ordained*, views which I have consolidated in the previous essay, "The Fires of Moloch." I give only one example owing to reasons of space. In view, however, of the strong opposition which exists, and of which I have had plenty of evidence, to any attempt to tell the truth, the following short letter, which is typical of many others, was a great pleasure to get:—

"The Clergy House, "—— E.C.

"May I say how much I have enjoyed your last book? *First, &c*. It was hard to put it down without finishing it straight off.

"I hope it will do a power of good to stop the fearful and widespread sin.

"I do not think it at all too outspoken. The Bishop of London is quite plain on the matter. I believe a learned gynæcologist has an article supporting the statements made in his speech, in last month's *Nineteenth Century*."

I began by complaining that my post-bag often contained distressing letters asking for help which I was generally unable to supply. When I read over the correspondence which I have printed here I feel that I ought to regard my letter-box as a coffer of treasure, that my postman is indeed that same Hermes who brought the magic herb to Odysseus, my letters—

> "—Wing'd postilions that can fly
> From the Atlantic to the Arctic sky—
> The heralds and swift harbingers that move
> From East to West on embassies of love."

I only made what at the time I thought was a very small collection to print here—just a thin bundle taken from hundreds. Yet already I find that a third of the little pile has nearly filled my space and I fear that my readers will weary, even if they have read so far.

"The man is printing his testimonials like a pill-maker!" I can hear Meletus snarl. "Who cares whether a few stupid people *do* like his twaddle!" Lycom answers. Yet bear with me a little, brethren; you need not have read this paper, you know. Laugh if you will; laughter is the great agent that preserves a sense of proportion among us, and the man who laughs sounds the keynote of tolerance. But laugh kindly, remembering the vanity of authors and the wish of all of us to stand well with the world.

My post-bag day by day contains a certain missive which is not a letter. It is a little green, printed wrapper which most authors, painters, players, and musicians are in the habit of receiving—it is the batch of press-cuttings which show how the critics regard my books and what the paragraphists have to say. The critics are always being criticized by authors. Mr. Jones gravely points out the duty of appreciating his work that the reviewer owes to literature. Nor is it, as Mr. Birrell pointed out, in the days when he wrote delightful essays and had not been forced to dance to the dictates of political dissent, the unsuccessful author who is the loudest in complaint. The beginner, the men and women who cannot say as yet that they have achieved a definite position, these seem to have digested the poet laureate's neat advice—

> "Friend, be not fretful if the voice of fame,
> Along the narrow way of hurrying men,
> Whereunto echo echo shouts again,
> Be all day long not noisy with your name."

But others are not so reticent. For my part I cannot understand the attitude of the novelist who publishes shouts of resentment at criticism which is not to his liking—remember, in view of what I am going to say later, that I use the word *criticism*. The other day, while on a journey to the Riviera, I bought a copy of Miss Marie Corelli's last book of essays, in Paris. I read it through the night until I fell asleep, and when the sun flooded the olive trees I took it up once more, and finished it just as we ran into Marseilles. I suppose that this lady is the most popular writer of the day. She is a great modern force; she reaches an enormous audience, and speaks straight to their hearts. I have heard dozens of men and women say that they prefer her to any author alive or dead. Now this is surely to be in a very splendid position, is it not? Why, then, should a woman whose talents have won for her such place and power, print an angry, comprehensive, and I am afraid sometimes, spiteful indictment of all critics? I can't see her reason.

Destouches wrote:—

> "La plainte est pour le fat, le bruit est pour le sot;
> L'honnête homme hue s'éloigne et ne dit mot!"

Miss Corelli assumes that all the reviewers are venal and dishonest, and that because they do not praise her books, books which are so influential and popular, they are bad critics. Reviewers, take them all in all, are nothing of the sort. I have written hundreds of book reviews. I have reviewed for the *Saturday Review*, the *Academy*, and the *Bookman*, among other journals. Therefore you may assume that I met plenty of other critics, and know their polity and ways. We were all honest enough in those days—that I say without any doubt at all. I remember Mr. Frank Harris, the then editor of the *Saturday*, giving me a certain novel to review, and expressing himself with great point and freedom about it. As I was leaving his room he called me back, and said, as well as I can remember his words, "Remember that this is only *my* point of view, and what I want in this case is yours. You may like the stuff, and if you do, of course you will say so."

I *didn't* like it, and said so, but I have never forgotten the incident.

As I said in the beginning of this paper, directly my stories began to be occupied with religion as the force, *qui fait le monde à la ronde*, some of the critics began to be unkind. But what on earth is the use of wasting one's own time, and the time of the public, in fussing and complaining? The people who said this about my work were quite sincere. Their opinion is quite as good as mine, however much I don't agree with it. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.* My business is to earn a living for myself and for those who are dependent on me. Thank God I can do so. My duty is to hammer away at the doctrines in which I believe, and endeavour to get others to believe in them. Therefore I must not "call or cry aloud." I must go on doing what I am doing, and doing it *sans rançune*.

Remember, and I wish Miss Corelli, for example, could see this also, that criticism of novels in our day is a purely *literary* criticism. The theory of modern criticism is that Art is a thing by itself and owes no duty to Ethics. The reason for Art is, art. Ten years ago I think I would almost have gone to the stake for this doctrine. I believed in it devoutly; I couldn't be patient, even, in the presence of any one who argued otherwise. I well remember the indignant anger with which I repudiated the suggestion of my father, a

clergyman, that when I grew older and had suffered, when I came into real contact with the great central facts of life, I should think very differently. He was perfectly right. Art is the essential part of fiction, but it is not destroyed because it is employed as the handmaid of an ethical standpoint.

But this truth is no reason for "answering back" the critics who do not appreciate it. Nothing is quite true—except The Incarnation—a naïve statement you may call it, but as a corollary of the epigram, true too! It is better, by far, to realize that modern criticism is most valuable from the purely literary point of view, and yet that the purely literary point of view is only one side of the model the artist must study before he learns how to draw.

Therefore, when any critic tells me of this or that fault in technique, I take his expert opinion for what it is worth—an expert opinion—and try to learn from his criticism. I try to learn and do better. When the post-bag discloses a criticism obviously animated by personal prejudice or dictated by the religious politics of the paper in which it appears, I grin and bear it—though I don't like it!—and console myself with the verse composed by the American poet whose critics were *always* unfair, or at least he said so—

> "The cow is in the garden,
> The cat is in the lake,
> The pig is in the hammock,
> What difference *does* it make!"

No author, who has a public at all, suffers from *criticism* which is fair or even from *criticism* which is unfair.

An author is not well advised in publicly answering or combating either.

When Disraeli said that the critics were the "people who had failed in literature and art," he forgot that bad wine often makes excellent vinegar. I am quite certain that I have never suffered in the suffrages of my readers—and so in pocket!—from hostile criticism. And I have had any amount of it—the little green wrapper is not always pleasant reading. But I have never shouted out that I have been personally hurt or wounded by hostile criticism, and I certainly never shall. The days are past when the *Quarterly* could kill Keats, and the days have not arrived when the reprobatory finger which is sometimes wagged at one can take one's bread-and-butter away.

But sometimes—and now, please, I unsheathe my toy sword, or at least flourish my cane—the postman brings something that cannot hurt one seriously, though it stings. This something is not criticism at all. It stings, not because of the actual attempt—even the smallest plants cannot grow unhampered by insect life—but because, puny as it may be, it is so manifestly unfair. In this regard I can sympathize with Miss Corelli because, however the critics may write of her books from the literary pedestal, they sometimes write of her, from a shelter trench, in a very different way.

One morning I read a little sneer about myself which was entirely without justification or explanation. It occurred in a Catholic magazine, which I will call *The Thesaurus*, dated June 1906, and was written by the editor, who may be designated as the Rev. Mr. Roget. Here it is:—

> "Perhaps one of those authors whom the public love—Miss Corelli, Mr. Hall Caine, or Mr. 'Guy Thorne'—may be preparing a novel with the education controversy as its theme. In that case, one can only hope devoutly that the Bishop of London will *not* think it advisable to advertise the book from the pulpit. Yet if one could only have heard a frank opinion of *When it was Dark* expressed by the last Bishop of London—Dr. Creighton—that would indeed have been a joy."

The Thesaurus is a pleasant little magazine devoted to quite innocuous fiction and articles. It has, in the number I quote above, nine pages of advertisements, an article called "In the Engadine," a "Few hints on church embroidery," a very happily named story called "In a Dull Moment," etc, etc. Indeed it could not hurt a fly. I say this much, not because I have any dislike for this nice little periodical, but in order to point out that in answering its editor's remarks about me, I am not endeavouring to become known to the world, and to advertise myself by the endeavour to link my name to its editor's.

There is a certain sort of hurried and sporadic writing which is not criticism, but is irresponsible nonsense set down to fill a page no less than to gratify a prejudice.

It's all give and take in literary polemics. People are always going for one in the press, and very often with perfect justice. But when one reads remarks like those I have quoted, and remarks written by a Mr. Roget, then, if it amuses one, there is at least a text for a small monition.

Miss Marie Corelli is very well able to look after herself. However much Mr. Roget may endeavour to pillory this lady in his "Study Window," I don't suppose she cares. She is a great modern force; Mr. Roget isn't. Mr. Hall Caine will not, I imagine, try to stop being one of the authors "whom the public love" because of the editor of *The Thesaurus*. Nor have I, the humblest person in the trilogy, yet suffered.

And, believe me, it is not because I personally care much that I am writing like this, nor is Mr. Roget any armed assassin in a narrow path. But such an one ought to be laughed at a little, because he is typical of a class of young men who should be taught the economy of reserve.

Mr. Roget did not explain his reasons for attacking me, though I, quite frankly, give mine for attacking him. But as—through the lamentable chances of war—my remarks will be read by a great many more folk than his were read by, we are quits, and I can start fair, though with all the rigour of the game.

The Editor in his paragraph not only states that he himself does not like one of my stories—*i.e.*, *When it was Dark*, but implies that the Bishop of London was not justified in liking it, and saying that he liked it in public.

It is quite within Mr. Roget's right not to like the book—thousands of people didn't like it. But what are his functions for sneering at it with confidence and weight?

First of all his age is thirty-six, and he is the editor of *The Thesaurus*.

We can dismiss those qualifications at once.

Then he is the Vicar of a Worcestershire church, and a well-known writer of light verse.

He began his journalistic career in 1890 by contributing "turnovers" to the *Globe*, has contributed to *Punch* and *The Nineteenth Century*, is a leader writer on a Church paper, and reviews theological books.

This is his journalistic career, and he has written seven little books in all, mostly verse. I take these particulars from *Who's Who*.

All this is very well. It is a good thing for all of us to be in *Who's Who*, though, by the way, it does the latter-day "celebrity" more harm to be out of it than it does him good to be in it!

Mr. Roget's record for a young clergyman of thirty-six is honourable enough. He has done better for himself than most young priests of that age. But this does not constitute him "An author whom the public love," etc.

I am very glad to find my own name in the fat red book, which is so useful, though in my little autobiography I never thought it necessary to mention the first "turnover." I certainly did venture to say that one of my stories had sold 300,000 copies; but that was probably vanity, and I regret it.

But, to be serious, has my critic done as much in journalism or the literary world as your deponent? I'm not going to catalogue my work any more, but, frankly, he has not. All I ask, with proper humility, is just this—Is this gentleman qualified to sneer at me—not to *criticize* me, which is quite another thing—just because the public have approved of what I have tried to sell them and have bought it?

In sneering at me he sneers at the public, whose taste I have been fortunate enough to please, and whose opinion of what I have to sell has lifted me and those who are dear to me from poverty to comfort. I have worked enormously. I have put all I have got in me into my work, and I feel that work honestly done has been honestly rewarded. If I could write better than I do, I should be very happy. I know perfectly well how inadequate my work is, but I know what this "critic" of mine does not know, and has not inquired into, how much it costs me to do it and how deeply I believe in what I say.

And does not Mr. Roget also seek the suffrages of the public? In the same issue of *The Thesaurus* to which I have referred above, he uses the phrase "...us who are trying to make an income out of literature."

Of course, he is trying to be "one of those authors," etc. He admits it. He tells us he is trying to make an income out of the public. And yet, while he is doing this, he insults the public for preferring "those other authors"—or, at least, that's how one can hardly help taking it!

Moreover he is a priest as well as a literary man. As a literary man, I attack one who has not yet shown himself to have the slightest right to sneer at people who write—whatever their literary faults may seem to him—always on the side of good, with a belief in the saving power of the Christian faith, and in the same hope as that in which he writes.

A million people read one of Miss Corelli's books, and they pay her to do so.

Two hundred people listen to one of Mr. Roget's sermons, and he is paid to preach them. But do authors go down into Worcestershire and sneer at the sermon of the priest because his own congregation love to hear him?

This is the first time in my life that I have ever answered any one who has written unkindly of me. And it will be the last. *Literary* criticism is a thing done by specialists, and with every right on their side. *Literary* criticism is in the main correct. When I publish a book, and a literary writer points out this or that fault, I am myself literary man enough to know that he has put his finger on the weak spot nine times out of ten. Then I try again. I have said this before.

But mere unqualified contempt on the part of one who has not been able to qualify himself to express any contempt of value for public judgment deserves remark.

And now it is necessary to say a word about this gentleman's reprobation of the Bishop of London's sermons about *When it was Dark*. It is not a nice thing to have to say, but this young clergyman is typical of a small tribe which make it necessary for me to say it.

The obvious suggestion is that I went out of my way to induce the Bishop of London to advertise one of my books. That is not the case.

I have never met the Bishop of London in my life. I have never even seen him. I have had one letter from him about my book, which I will not quote here, but which I will send Mr. Roget whenever he asks for it. It is the only communication I have ever had from him. Neither directly nor indirectly did I attempt to get the bishop to advertise me.

Yet his lordship preached about the book six or seven times—once in Westminster Abbey. He advised his ordination candidates to read it, and in his addresses to these gentlemen—subsequently published in book form—the passage remains.

The late Bishop of Truro advised the clergy to read it in several diocesan meetings. He also wrote a long signed article in a great London daily paper about my books, in which he said:—

> "A story written by Guy Thorne, who has proved his gift and its purpose, may well touch the sore place of our race with a hand that is more human than statistics and more sympathetic than many organizations."

Dr. Gott is just dead as I write this. I have many letters from him. In one of them—which again I will not quote, but which I will send my critic for his private reading when he asks for it—his lordship said that the book had helped him greatly.

There have been thousands of personal letters from readers about this one book. Dozens of them were from clergymen, from pastors of the Nonconformist and also the Anglican Churches. All this also I have said before, and the half-dozen letters which I have quoted have their own value, bear their own witness.

One of the greatest Nonconformist divines of England preached about the book.

There—I have said enough. It is sickening to have to say it. But Mr. Roget leaves one no alternative. He is not fair. For some reason or other—I do not know or care what it is, for he is an utter stranger to me—he takes this line. In the same issue of his magazine he writes of the President of the Congregational Union—"Mr. Jowett's presidential address, as well as the speeches which followed it, were not remarkable, to say the least, for the charity of language used about the Church. All the old sectarian bitterness was expressed in the usual way."

...I have been writing for many hours. The snow was blowing in from the Channel over the South Foreland when I began. The sky was a great pewter-coloured dome from which Mother Hulda's feathers were falling, when I took up the pen.

As the day waxed there came a faint, yellow, and almost menacing gleam of sunshine, and as it waned the leaden-grey grew black, and night came silently over the landscape until at last she opened her great funereal black fan.

They brought me lamps and set them on my table. Those who love me and look after me came noiselessly up the stairs, silently into the room and put logs upon the study fire and left me alone once more.

It is nearly midnight, and the winter wind pipes sadly outside this old Kentish house, so remote from other habitations, so renowned in the annals of the Channel cliffs. With all its faults, all its egoisms, take this last essay in my first book of essays, and do not think hardly of me. Forgive what you discern here of petulance, of arrogance, and of conceit. I have done my day's labour, and I have tried to be sincere. I have done my day's labour, and now I am going to descend to an old room, with its oaken beams and aroma of the past, to take the supper of a man who has toiled. The dear people, and unfortunate ones! who wait upon the erratic hours of an author are waiting for me there.

And then to bed, and may the humble supplication I shall send up to Almighty God for myself and those I love, for those who read what I have written, have its hearing in the place where "hearts and wills are weighed." May I become a better and worthier man because I have the opportunity of addressing you who read. And may God grant me to mend a faulty life.

Good-night and Amen.

Wanstone Court,
December, 1906.

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