

## *THEIR* RELIGION

ALSO BY  
A. J. RUSSELL

*For Sinners Only*  
*One Thing I Know*



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A. J. RUSSELL

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## THE REASON WHY

RELIGION has been described as a power beyond ourselves which makes for righteousness.

But if we are speaking of the Christian religion, there is something which we must add to this.

For Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, Anglican or Nonconformist, implies belief in a personal God who made us and all the world and who has a claim on our obedience.

We are all conscious of the ordinary workaday world in which we live. But is this world everything? Is there anything beyond it?

Outside the natural order is there a supernatural, directed, as the Bible teaches, by that God who sent His Son into the world to unite us with Himself?

No man can evade these questions, and on his answer to them will depend his attitude to life, and, if he is consistent, his standard of conduct.

\* \* \* \*

What I have tried to show in this designedly popular book is how a company of great men, among the most famous who have ever lived on this earth, have responded to these questions.

What has been their reaction, as a scientist might put it, to the great assertion which lies at the root of Christianity that behind "all the changes and chances of this mortal life" is—God, and that it is our duty "to obey Him, to fear Him and to love Him"?

New theories of life and conduct are put forward as generation succeeds generation; and it is

certain that were any of our heroes to be re-born to-day they would find much in the modern world to puzzle them.

Yet the great problem of human life and its meaning remains for ever the same, and Christ's answer to it has not changed.

Of this problem all our characters, from Shakespeare to Dickens, from Livingstone to Darwin, have been aware.

Let us see how they have faced it.

\* \* \* \* \*

May I, as the author of *For Sinners Only* and *One Thing I Know*, add one word of explanation?

Those books had largely to do with the Group Movement. That I have made no reference to the Groups in this book is chiefly due to the limitations imposed by my subject-matter, and must not be taken to mean that I have lost sympathy with the Christian ideals re-emphasised by the movement.

\* \* \* \* \*

I should like to acknowledge the assistance which I have received in the revision of this book from my friend Mr. R. N. Carew Hunt, whose *Calvin*, published last year, I would commend to my readers.

A. J. RUSSELL.

Maitland,  
Orpington,  
Kent.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE REASON WHY . . . . .	vii
ABRAHAM LINCOLN . . . . .	11
<u>ROBERT BURNS</u> . . . . .	35
MARSHAL FOCH . . . . .	59
GLADSTONE . . . . .	93
NAPOLEON . . . . .	111
DISRAELI . . . . .	135
NELSON . . . . .	157
DICKENS . . . . .	175
WASHINGTON . . . . .	205
LIVINGSTONE . . . . .	229
CROMWELL . . . . .	249
DARWIN . . . . .	271
SHAKESPEARE . . . . .	299
JESUS OF NAZARETH . . . . .	323

## WORLD-SHAKERS

One man with a dream, at pleasure,  
Shall go forth and conquer a crown.

\* \* \* \* \*

A breath of our inspiration  
Is the life of each generation.

\* \* \* \* \*

For we are afar with the dawning  
And the suns that are not yet high,  
And out of the infinite morning  
Intrepid you hear us cry—  
How, spite of your human scorning,  
Once more God's future draws nigh.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Great hail ! we cry to the comers  
From the dazzling unknown shore ;  
Bring us your suns and your summers  
And renew our world as of yore.*

(From O'Shaughnessy's "Ode.")

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN





## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me.

*Lincoln.*

NIGHT on the Ohio River !  
On either side stretch the dark lines of the Sugar Coast.

Moored hard by the plantation is a small flat-bottomed boat. She looks insignificant enough, sleeping there on the mile-wide bosom of the great river.

Yet to a gang of seven marauding negroes she has significance : a definite attraction.

They creep near, determined to rob, perhaps to murder. Their task should be easy. Seven powerful blacks against two dozing whites.

One of these two, the skipper, is son of the owner. He is taking the little boat, laden with farm produce, down to New Orleans, the city of markets—especially of the famous slave-market, dreaded by all negroes.

His "crew" is an awkward young giant of six feet four, the odd-man-out type, a lean ungainly figure with great hands and long sinewy arms ; he is a lazy, lonely labourer who wastes his leisure poring over books, just as college students do when not at leisure.

But the features of this raw uneducated youth already reveal a singular resemblance to our own Disraeli. They have the same massive brow, width of temple, and lofty coronal proportions, with a

striking similarity of nose and mouth, and the same suggestion of a quizzical tendency at the corners of the strong lips.

Moreover, the "crew" is just the man to have aboard a flat-bottomed boat when the opportunity comes, as it does now, of using his wiry muscles for its defence—muscles capable of driving an axe deeper into a felled tree than those of any other backwoodsman in Indiana.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sudden footsteps cause the whites to spring up. Young Hercules rushes forward and knocks the negro leader into the water. The second, third and fourth leap aboard, and are similarly received.

Terrified, the others flee, followed by the two whites, who, in modern schoolboy language, "beat them up."

*Some, perhaps all, of these seven negroes are destined to be emancipated by the muscular giant who has just thrashed them.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Young Abraham Lincoln, frontiersman, sturdy defender of the flat-bottomed boat against negro thieves, moves down to New Orleans, and has his first glimpse of slave-market horrors.

Here the ever-ready jest, always on his lips, is temporarily silenced; the look of tragic sadness always haunting his grey eyes deepens perceptibly. He seems to be sharing the sufferings of his fellow human beings as he sees their families torn apart, individual members driven away in chains, shuddering and writhing under the ready lash.

A young mulatto girl enters the slave-ring.  
She is stark naked.

Buyers are urged to handle her as though she were an animal, to test her soundness.

She is driven up and down; she is turned about; she may be pinched or prodded by the brutalised crowd.

It is said that Lincoln, meditating once upon such sights as these, burst forth with :

“ My God ! boys, let’s get away from this. If ever I get the chance to hit that thing I’ll hit it hard ! ”

Abraham Lincoln hits hard.

Hard-hitting at slavery becomes the expression of his religion.

The man who can bury an axe deeper into a tree than any of his fellows drives an axe of muscular Christianity, or brotherly love, whichever you prefer, clean through the heart of slavery !

The reserves of energy called up that night in the boat, and held in restraint as he walks through the slave-markets of New Orleans, are poured forth in a titanic struggle which in the end wins him the martyr’s crown.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the years following that trip in the flat-bottomed boat, this sad and lonely figure, this mysterious prophet called forth by Destiny to lead a great nation upward into a higher life of liberty, justice and truth, is to shoulder the bitterest disappointments and to sustain the shocks of repeated disasters.

But he goes remorselessly forward, bearing his country’s cross, constantly hiding his sorrows under a mask of humour, but never trying to allay the national pain by hiding from his countrymen the dismal truth of misadventure and defeat.

And now the years have rolled, and he is back again in the slave territories, entering the changed and devastated capital of the defeated rebels; entering not in the rôle of victor, though he was truly the man who had won, but in deep humility, and unattended by a bodyguard, even here in the midst of foes.

Yet he has friends enough in the emancipated slaves who throng around him exulting in his presence.

"Glory, glory to God!" they cry. "Hurrah! hurrah! President Linkum hab come."

One old negress, standing at the door of her cabin, clasps her hands and prays:

"I thank Thee, dear Jesus, I behold President Linkum."

Others regard him as St. Paul was regarded—as one of the gods descended to earth. Delirious with joy, they worship the victorious emancipator who has decreed that in all the States of the Union the slaves shall be forever free.

\* \* \* \*

They say truly of him that he leads the life of a Puritan, though he behaves like a gallant cavalier to others—this lonely labourer who has come striding out of the backwoods to force his way to the White House and his kindly will upon his fellow-countrymen.

Will the American negro ever forget that White House reception on New Year's Day 1864?

The newly-emancipated blacks waited round the door and gazed in ecstasy at their benefactor. They watched their white over-lords file past, shaking the President's hand. Presently a few

bolder spirits ventured into the great hall, timidly hoping to participate in the reception.

They were told to come along. For the first time in their history blacks as well as whites are welcomed by the President of the United States!

Astonishment and rapture indescribable!

"For nearly two hours," says an observer, "Mr. Lincoln had been shaking hands with white visitors, and had become excessively weary; but here his nerves rallied at the unusual sight, and he welcomed the motley crowd with a heartiness that made them wild with exceeding joy.

"They laughed and wept and laughed, exclaiming through their blinding tears:

"'God bless you, Massa Linkum.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

And now let us go back to the start of the storm and explore the springs of his religion.

There is thunder in the air. He is Presidential candidate fighting against slavery-extension, fighting an opponent who doesn't care whether slavery is voted up or down, as they say in America, and who says with a sneer which raises coarse laughter that as between "a negro and a crocodile" he is for the negro; but as between a negro and a white man he is for the white man.

But the simple frontiersman preaches a nobler gospel, preaches it in that slow relentless masterful way of his, in rhythmic words of clear logic; but always he preaches the gospel of freedom:

*The wind shall blow and the rain shall fall on no man who goeth forth to unrequited toil.*

He preached it with such convincing moral

earnestness that a spiritual wave carried him over his opponent's head to the Presidential chair.

But before he reached that position of almost despotic power a strange scene was enacted in his election rooms. News comes that in one place, of twenty-three ministers of different denominations, all but three were voting against him. Voting against him because they took him to be an unbeliever, a freethinker, perhaps an infidel.

The rugged figure telescoped upwards in outraged dignity. He drew a New Testament from his pocket. His voice vibrated :

These men know well that I am for freedom in the territories, freedom everywhere, as free as the constitution and the laws will permit, and that my opponents are for slavery.

They know this, and yet with this book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live for a moment, they are going to vote against me. . . . I do not understand it at all.

He paused, for he was deeply moved. Several minutes passed before he could speak again. His tragic eyes were moist. He speaks again with an emphasis which now seems prophetic :

I *know* that there is a God, and that He hates slavery !  
I see a storm coming, and I *know* that His hand is in it !

If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready.

I am nothing, but Truth is everything.

I know that I am right because I know that liberty is right ; for Christ teaches it—and *Christ is God* !

I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same ; and they will find it so !

Douglas doesn't care whether slavery is voted up or down; but God cares and I care; and with God's help I shall not fail!

I may not see the end, but it will come, and I shall be vindicated, and these men will find that they have not read their Bibles aright.

That is Abraham Lincoln's declaration of faith! It should satisfy all but the intolerant and the infidel.

The men who read their Bibles wrongly and voted for slavery and thought Lincoln a freethinker may not have known that his early reading lessons at his step-mother's knee were from the Bible, or that his step-mother, so unlike the traditional type, was the good angel of his youth.

She at least could testify to his nobility of character: "I can say what scarcely any mother can: Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused in fact or appearance to do anything I asked him."

As a boy the uncouth young frontiersman did not go to church, for there were no churches within reach of his father's log cabin. Nor, indeed, did he ever join a church and in that way become a "professing Christian."

It has been said of him that a sense of humour and a clear and cautious brain prevented him from embracing Christianity as it was preached by those fervent itinerant evangelists who came his way in his youth.

His sensitive nature may have been repelled by the Gospel as it had been presented to him and he may have found nothing in it to satisfy his special need.

But, suppose that he did start life as an unbeliever. Many of the best Christians started thus before settling down into a sure faith—parsons as well as presidents.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet young Lincoln was not an unbeliever for long. The spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers was in his bones and sinews. Moral fibre was his endowment at birth. It was as natural for him to do right as to win a legal debate or an election.

Soon he feels that there must be a Hand that shapes our destinies, a Guiding Will operating outside himself to whose impartial but friendly judgment he must refer all phases of conduct, private and public alike.

Pensively he roams the pathless woods. He sits disconsolate by desolate streams and ponders on his destiny. He reads the life of Washington and wonders. He is Moses in Midian, a brooding genius who will presently enter the front rank of world statesmen and lose nothing in comparison with all his contemporaries.

He hears no spirit voices and claims no divine call, but he inclines now towards faith in a future state. And when presently the clerical deputation arrive to instruct him in his duty as President of the United States, saying that God has given them a message for him, he answers stoutly :

I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed that He would reveal it to me. . . .

For unless I am more directly deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know what



is the will of Providence in this matter; and if I can learn what it is I will do it. . . .

I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain, physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right.

Though the Kings of Israel, not excepting David, the greatest of them all, were often instructed by the prophets, Lincoln's attitude is reasonable enough, for it was his custom, until the end of his life, to pray for God's guidance; and to pray with the simplicity of a child. That it came to him through careful study of the facts made it none the less authentic. God works through His own laws.

There is no record of a sudden conversion to Christianity. But there is continuous evidence that he found the Way of Life and walked in it. Some of us stumble on that way through reason or sudden illumination, some through poetry or music, many through suffering and defeat.

Lincoln suffered sharply as a young man. When he lost the girl he loved his friends thought that his mind would go. But he found mental and spiritual tranquillity where few would look for it; and yet in the place most natural for a man of his transparent honesty to seek diligently until he found it—in his own political creed.

His noble panegyric to fallen heroes at Gettysburg begins and ends thus: "

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are equal. . . .

We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation under God shall

have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

He longs to see the will of the people prevail everywhere. And yet he sees this must be the will of the best type of people. And as the freethinker does not represent the highest type, his speeches undergo a change. Quotations from the Bible begin to be heard.

A fellow politician caustically says that he too believes in the Ten Commandments—but not on a political platform.

Is Lincoln hypocritical because of this change of front? Not a hypocrite, but a convert.

When electioneering he quotes the Bible to advocate moral rather than religious principles. He declares that all things desirable to man are contained therein, adding, rather unwisely, that but for it we could not know right from wrong. For surely there is such a thing as conscience; and there is also natural religion.

He hates cant, especially in himself, and though not a member of any church, in later life he regularly attends divine service. Often he repeats the line :

Oh why should the spirit of mortal be proud ?

And his favourite hymn is :

Hark the voice of Jesus crying  
Who will go and work to-day ?

He declares that the wisdom of Jesus surpasses that of all the philosophers.

He too is a dreamy philosopher whose frankness, moral worth, and inborn integrity will yield

to no effort to turn him from the right as he sees it. There he is, a lone visionary whose spiritual grandeur lifts him above his fellows to that pedestal of eminence which he occupies in his worthy memorial at Washington. Listen as he gives his farewell message to his countrymen and the world :

Fondly do we hope and fervently do we pray that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.

Yet if God wills that it shall continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid with another drawn by the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said :

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether !

With malice toward none ; with charity for all ; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

\* \* \* \* \*

Twenty ministers proclaimed him an unbeliever, though he had been practising Christianity from childhood. Sometimes it was rather muscular, suggestive of the affair of the flat-bottomed boat.

For instance, that day in the store which he once managed in New Salem. Enter the bully who storms and insults because he has to take his turn after the women customers.

Lincoln served in silence until the women had left. Then he leapt across the counter and demon-

strated that in New Salem at any rate the customer is not always right !

The struggle continues outside until the customer begs for mercy. There is a quick transformation. The avenging son of the prophets turns Good Samaritan. He takes him inside and washes his stripes.

And there was that wrestling match in New Salem which ended in a draw, but would have turned to a fight, as such matches usually did, but for Lincoln's cool courage and inborn sense of goodwill.

At the White House his patience was often tried. A man with a bad case had been allowed a series of long hearings. When Lincoln told him that he was in the wrong he replied that the President was determined not to give him justice.

Abraham Lincoln jumped to his feet.

"I can stand censure, but not insult," he cried. And seizing his accuser he marched him out of the room.

The man who thus had the unique "honour" of being thrown out by the President of the United States pleaded at the door for the papers which he had dropped during his unceremonious exit.

"They will be sent on," snapped the President, who, for once, had warmed to the occasion.

Yet Lincoln only fought for the right as he saw it; and he only fought when he saw there was no other way of achieving it.

He reproved a young officer who had quarrelled with his associates by saying that the advice of a father to a son : "Beware of entering into a quarrel; but, being in, bear it, that the opposed may beware of thee," was good, but not the best.

Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare time for personal contention.

Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control.

Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right, and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own.

Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him contending for the right.

Even killing the dog would not cure the bite.

At heart Lincoln was ever the peace-lover, ready at any time to extend the hand of friendship to all opponents, saying :

Come now and let us reason together.

He does this magnificently in his first Inaugural address when he unavailingly strives to arrest the bursting storm. From a heart overflowing with love he cries :

We are not enemies but friends.

We must not be enemies.

Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection.

The mystic chords of memory, stretching over every battle-field and every patriot's grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of Union when touched by the better angels of our nature.

He broadcast this appeal into an atmosphere charged with prejudice and ill-will. Malice and slander had done their worst, and the assembly had come together expecting to hear an unscrupulous politician, a frontier savage.

Instead they listened to the inspired appeal of a kindly prophet, a rugged Daniel come to judgment in the crucial hour of the national life.

They called him an unbeliever and many worse things; and ministers of the Gospel voted against him.

But presently the critics of his creed found the coals of fire descending on their heads. For while others breathed out threatenings and slaughter in those grim days of uncertainty and despair which preceded his triumph, he alone was turning over in his mind a policy which was to soften the blow of defeat when it descended on the proud Southern enemy.

For the foe's benefit he tells a Christian parable that cannot be improved upon by any of the ministers who have voted against him. Someone asks how he proposes to punish the rebel President, Jefferson Davis, when he is captured? Asks this of one who has a reputation for seeking a reasonable excuse to pardon the wrongdoer.

The President becomes reminiscent. He tells one of his stories—of a boy in Springfield who saved his money and bought a racoon. After the novelty had worn off the little animal became a great trouble. The boy had difficulty in keeping clear of its wild rages; his clothes were torn in pieces. The lad sat on a kerbstone utterly weary and disconsolate.

A passer-by asked what the trouble was, and was told that the 'coon was such a nuisance!

"Why don't you get rid of him?"

"Hush!" said the boy. "Don't you see he's gnawing his rope off? And I'm letting him do it: then I'm going home to tell the folk that he's got away from me."

*That was his attitude towards the defeated enemy. Dictators have something to learn from Abraham Lincoln.*

Davis escaped, was captured, imprisoned, but soon pardoned.

\* \* \* \* \*

Stern men said that Lincoln's kindness towards the erring was merely weakness. But the man who said "We won't break up the Union and you shan't," was as strong in character as he was patient and lowly in heart; always ready to listen to every side of a question in an honest endeavour to discover God's will.

At first some of his Cabinet, including his Secretary of State, despised him, but he disregarded their attitude. Soon they realised that only one voice in the Cabinet counted—the voice of the President. Once a man swore in his presence, and all were astonished at the rebuke he received.

A letter pleading for pardon reached the White House from a notorious slave-dealer who had served his sentence but could not pay his fine. The President's heart turned to flint. He sat stern and unmoved.

This was unusual. Presently he made his pronouncement :

I could forgive the foulest murderer for such an appeal, for it is my weakness to be easily moved when asked to be merciful.

But the man who would go to Africa and rob her of her children to sell them into endless bondage with no other motive than that of getting dollars and cents, is so much worse than the most depraved murderer that he may die in gaol before I will give him liberty.

\* \* \* \* \*

At all other times we find him striving to temper justice with mercy. Hear this testimony from a general who opposed him :

During the first week of my command there were twenty-four deserters sentenced by court-martial to be shot, and the warrants for their execution were sent to the President to be signed. He refused.

I went to Washington and had an interview.

I said: "Mr. President, unless these men are made an example of the army itself will be in danger. Mercy to the few is cruelty to the many."

He replied: "Mr. General, there are already too many weeping widows in the United States. Don't ask me to add to their number, for *I won't do it.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Towards women he shows grave and gentle courtesy. That too is part of his creed.

Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine, should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me more unhappy than to fail in that effort. . . .

I want in all cases to do right, and most particularly so in all cases with women.

He wrote that in his youth, in days of perplexity as to whom he should marry. But as President Lincoln he constantly showed the same habit of mind.

Every United States citizen had a right to call at the White House to have a word with him—if they could catch him disengaged.

In that ceaseless stream of callers was a woman whose husband had been unjustly sentenced to be shot.

Three days she waited in the President's ante-room; and always with a baby in her arms. But the President is so busy. Late in the afternoon of the third day he hastens along the passage to his private rooms for refreshment.



And hears a child's cry.

He dashes back, demands to know if a woman with a baby is in the ante-room. She is ordered in, her case heard, her husband pardoned.

She leaves, her eyes uplifted, lips moving in thanksgiving.

The attendant approaches and indicates the friend at court.

Baby saved his father's life.

Some cases are too hopeless for kindness. There are no extenuating circumstances.

While hearing one of these the President discovered that the man had once been a wounded soldier. He had shed his blood for his country. Lincoln listened to his story and gave him his liberty.

He pardoned another man who would otherwise have been executed. Suspecting that his reprieve might miscarry, he orders his carriage and drives over, in case of accidents. For subordinates too may prove insubordinate. If they can find good excuse.

Some of our generals complain that I impair discipline and subordination in the army by my pardons and respites (says the President, his eye twinkling).

But it makes me rested after a hard day's work if I can find some good excuse for saving a man's life.

I go to bed happy as I think how joyous the signing of my name will make him and his family and friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

The pro-Slavery ministers complained that he was an unbeliever.

But Christ taught forgiveness as well as reconciliation and restitution—all points in Lincoln's creed.

As a young man he practised restitution

The library of his father's log cabin held just a few books—the Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress*, a spelling-book. . . .

And when Honest Abe's young brain, hungry for knowledge, discovered a literary gold-mine, the *Life of George Washington*, in the house of a neighbour, his melancholy eyes glowed like youth beholding a Christmas-tree.

Yes, he could borrow it. But he must take great care of the treasure. For though there was a copy in almost every American home, this was a prized possession.

But the Log Cabin was not the White House. George Washington, having worked his hardest, was given shelter for the night; but next morning he was soaking wet. Rain had beaten through a crack in the roof.

Here *was* trouble. The book was ruined. Lincoln had no money to make good the loss, and money never became much concern of his. But he offered to offset the price of the book with manual labour. He worked hard for three full days in making restitution.

His "free librarian" bore a Scottish name!

\* \* \* \* \*

Over in New Salem one of Lincoln's customers was inadvertently charged six cents too much. So at night, after the store was closed, the long un-gainly figure of Abraham Lincoln trudged two or three miles to make restitution—*of threepence!*

He did the same for a woman who was served with a quarter of a pound of butter instead of the half pound for which she paid.

After his law studies, undertaken when he was a grocer, had borne fruit and he became a successful lawyer, whenever he took a fee in his partner's absence, he would carefully fold the half and put it away in his pocket for "Billy."

But why not make a note of the amount and use the money meantime? he was asked.

"Because I promised my step-mother never to use any money belonging to another person."

So they called him Honest Old Abe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of the ministers voted against him.

But how many attained to the Christian standards he set himself and laid down for his profession? Here are a few:

Never take more than a small retainer in advance.

When paid beforehand you are more than a common mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case as if something is still in prospect for you.

Persuade your neighbours to compromise whenever you can.

Point out to them that the nominal winner is often the real loser—in fees, expenses and waste of time.

As a peacemaker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.

Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than the one who does this.

Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles whereon to stir up strife and put money in his pocket?

A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which would drive such men out of it.

This is his crisp reply to a man who invited him to undertake a cause that seemed unjust:

Yes, there is no reasonable doubt but that I can gain your case for you. I can set a whole neighbourhood at loggerheads.

I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby you can get six hundred dollars which rightfully belong, it appears to me, as much to them as to you.

I shall not take your case, but I will give you a little advice for nothing. You seem a sprightly energetic man. I advise you to try your hand at making that money some other way.

Facing a charge sometimes made against his profession, Lincoln said :

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are dishonest. . . . Let no young man, choosing the law for a calling, yield for one moment to this popular belief.

Resolve to be honest at all events, and if in your judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, *resolve to be honest without being a lawyer.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Lincoln neither smoked nor drank intoxicants. Yet he was no fanatic.

When complaint was made to him that Grant took too much liquor, this practical and teetotal statesman, whose patience had been over-strained by hesitating and incompetent generals, ironically retorted that he would like to send them the same brand of liquor on which Grant won his battles.

Masking his natural melancholy with geniality, often appearing to be sparkling with fun when he was sick at heart, he went blithely forward, preaching his lay sermons and trying them out in his daily life.

That sermon which he often preached to his sons was short, snappy, but comprehensive. It embraced all of his religion.

Don't drink.	Don't smoke.
Don't chew.	Don't swear.
Don't gamble.	Don't lie.
Don't cheat.	

Love God.	Love your fellow-man.
Love Truth.	Love virtue.
And be happy.	

Lincoln loved animals too. There is that tale of the pig which a travelling-companion told him that he had seen "back there sinking into a slough."

Lincoln reined in his horse. He was sorry, but he must return and rescue that pig.

His companion thinks it a joke and laughs. But Lincoln dismounts, goes to the drowning pig, gives a powerful tug, which might have saved its mother as well, and leaves it on the edge to recover.

\* \* \* \* \*

This queer primitive giant loves pigs and negroes, and his enemies too; even those enemies who are the most difficult—those of his own party.

He hates slavery, but never the slave-holder.

Yet when a man, whatever his position, dares both to advocate and live Lincoln's creed, he invariably arouses great enmity.

When the devil in man sees sheer goodness in his fellow-man, he must destroy it.

Hate and jealousy always kill. They killed Abraham Lincoln.

\* \* \* \* \*

Newspapers down south—such was their frenzy of hatred—offered rewards for his assassination. . . .

He had no wish to go to the theatre that evening. Grant couldn't go, and he went as a duty.

Booth shot from behind, jumped into full view of the audience and shouted :

*So be it with all tyrants. The South is avenged.*

Turning from the dumbfounded audience, the murderer dashed from the stage and galloped south. The soldiery pursued.

Found in hiding, Booth refused to leave, and the house was fired. A soldier shot and the assassin died.

Had it been otherwise, had Lincoln recovered and the other been captured, the tender-hearted President, who bore malice toward none, would have pardoned—John Wilkes Booth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ministers of the Gospel voted against him, saying that he was not a “professing Christian.”

But as the gentle spirit of Abraham Lincoln, now forever free from its tragic melancholy, sped upwards through the Milky Way, the Gates of Pearl opened of their own accord.

He is received within by One whose will he has striven to obey, whose countenance is as the sun when he shineth in his strength.

And as the hand of Honest Abe is grasped in greeting, he thrills to feel the wound-prints there. He listens with bowed head to a Voice which is as the sound of many waters pronouncing his third, the heavenly, Inaugural :

*Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

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# ROBERT BURNS





## ROBERT BURNS

The daisy by his ploughshare cleft  
The lips of women loved and left.

*Swinburne.*

THE grim interior of one of those choirless Presbyterian churches whose outlines always troubled the sensitive eye of Robert Burns.

"Why don't *we* build beautiful churches?" he laments as he contrasts the kirk with the churches of Rome and England. Was it not that Scotland was putting into education the money which she might have spent on beautifying the national kirk?

But the forbidding lines of Scottish churches are not the primary cause of his secret agitation this Sabbath morning. Something more intimate and poignant—indeed, utterly ridiculous—disturbs him; something more in keeping with many other extravagant experiences of his impetuous career.

For the sordid, the sublime, and the grotesque accompany our Don Juan of the poets during most of his thirty-seven years of passionate pilgrimage.

The ploughboy of the moment, who is to become shortly a literary comet and Scotland's national poet, who is to write "Scots Wha Hae" and "Auld Lang Syne," is about to undergo the Presbyterian form of public penance. For he has sinned the deadly sin.

Young Lizzie Paton's unhappy state has been brought to the notice of the kirk; and the

minister, exercising his legal powers, has ordered both sinners to appear on the cutty-stool of repentance, where, in the presence of an approving congregation, they must endure with what grace they may that pulpit homily against their immoral conduct which custom enjoins.

Sometimes the girl transgressor receives orders to wear sackcloth. But rather than accept this further indignity some girls had committed suicide. Therefore sackcloth was no longer the attire prescribed by regulation for girls consuming the ashes of repentance.

This feared and hated cutty-stool was a small platform prominently set up between the first rows of pews and the precentor's box. Robert and his companion in transgression were in full view of the keenly interested congregation during the whole of the service.

The elderly minister, his ponderous sermon ended, now calls upon them to rise and listen attentively as he sternly rebukes their folly. Though Burns endeavours to hide his confusion under an affectation of arrogance, this public humiliation produces an inward emotion that develops into a slow fever.

He is a creature of such restless moods ; he passes so swiftly from one pole to the other, he is endowed with a temperament so unmanageable, that his body agitates visibly when his muse is working ; so that he, of all persons, cannot survive public censure without an aftermath of physical suffering.

\* \* \* \* \*

The memory of his humiliation in Mauchline kirk rankles for many a tempestuous day. Long

afterwards he visits a ruined abbey, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship, at Dunfermline. While his fellow-traveller mounts the cutty-stool and adopts the rôle of penitent, Burns climbs into the pulpit and delivers a ludicrous reproof and exhortation, brilliant but blasphemous, parodied from his own experience in the seat of shame at Mauchline.

On another occasion he writes "to a lady who was looking up the text during sermon":

Fair maid, you need not take the hint  
Nor idle texts pursue :  
'Twas guilty sinners that he meant  
Not angels such as you.

But he was in no such gay mood immediately after his public exposure. His lacerated soul must seek balm for its wounds and bruises. Relief came in poetry.

Without the toils of study he commands a triumphant lyric style that transcends anything which has appeared in these isles since Shakespeare's day.

The poetic genius of my country (he says) found me, as the prophetic bard did Elisha, at the plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me.

She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes, and rural pleasures of my native tongue.

I tuned my wild artless notes as she inspired.

An inspired introduction to his poetry !

But this "fire of fierce and laughing light," as Swinburne describes him, actually settled into his poetic career with a poem of welcome to his illegitimate child.

That was a bad beginning in Puritan Scotland. Some have said that he was born to reassert the Scottish spirit as it would have been but for Puritanism. Yet that spirit did not need a genius to reassert its nature; it is ever with us. Of a truth his artless notes are wild and recklessly tuned.

Bitterly he satirised the elderly minister who, doing his duty as the Church then saw it, had ordered him to this seat of indignity.

He winged his sallies of wit and sarcasm at the old school of Calvinism and the hypocrites of the district. They might have needed it. But Burns was no saint.

Yet the arrows from his bulging quiver flew unerringly. They penetrated astounded and sometimes smugly reverend targets. Some were poisoned arrows.

He descended to Rabelaisian humour which was readily consumed by the irreverent and the lewd. The fantastic writings of the sparkling ploughman were soon copied, passed from hand to hand, slyly scanned and chuckled over, or read aloud to those who could not read for themselves, in odd corners where men meet together, especially in places of disrepute.

The Bacchanalian flavour of some of these effusions, written by one whose early death was to be hastened by his own intemperance, arrested the eye in public taverns; copies were hung on thorns in the hedgerows for the delectation of the ribald and prurient-minded.

His pious friends and relatives, especially his mother, remonstrated against the free-flowing revel

of these satires upon orthodoxy, the blasphemy of "Holy Willie's Prayer" ("Holy Willie" was a drunken hypocrite, a robber of the poor and a leading elder of the Mauchline kirk), and against "The Holy Tulzie" (a quarrel between ministers); and other poems in which Burns used the wine of the angels to lower the tone of morality and to glorify illicit love and reckless conviviality.

His malicious attacks on the "unco guid" and hypocrisy in "The Ordination" and in that satirical masterpiece "The Holy Fair" sparkled with impish genius. And they came ungraciously from one whose celestial fire was to promote him to the front rank of great poets, and from that clear spring of lyric beauty which was to endow the world with "Tam o' Shanter" and "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

Yet Burns continued to find relief from his harrowed feelings as he drove his lampoons into the religious world about him. He seemed to take delight in the hornet's nest that he stirred up. And he allowed Lizzie Paton to go away without offering her marriage.

\* \* \* \* \*

With his passions "raging like demons" he went recklessly into deeper trouble. The parents of another comely girl, Jean Armour (and perhaps bold Jean herself), were in the kirk that Sunday morning when he was held up to public contumely; and they surely listened with dour approval to the minister's rebuke.

They were the more pleased because "this detestable youth," as they would have it, had already begun a friendly acquaintance with their

daughter. They thought this "wild and worthless fellow" was a danger to the district and, to respectable families like theirs, a public menace.

He had conquering airs with women; he had the dash and grace that, as Stevenson says, come with assurance. He had told a gay company that he wished he could get the lassies to like him as well as they liked his dog.

Jean has youth and girlish charm. Burns' roving black eye is caught and held by the sight of her as she bleaches clothes on Mauchline Green. His dog, who loves him so well, scampers across. Four mischievous paws leave imprints on the bleached linen.

This is not really love at first sight, for there is never real love between them. But Jean had a hoyden's ways. She coquetted with one who throughout his short life never acquired the will or the wisdom to resist his passions.

Jean asked :

"Has Robbie Burns found a lassie to like him as well as his dog?"

Burns and his three life-long friends—the sordid, the sublime, and the grotesque—are together again in wild revel. With Lizzie Paton there had been trouble and shame enough : now Jean's illegitimate twins become the scandal of the countryside.

Jean's parents are furious. Burns has no money to pay the maintenance claims; the law threatens. He prepares to escape to the West Indies :

The bursting tears my heart declare  
Farewell, the bonny banks of Ayr.

But he has by now written sufficient for a volume

of poems, and these are published at the crucial moment. And the astounding discovery is made that he has produced a volume of masterpieces in six months!

\* \* \* \* \*

Instead of being further disgraced by imprisonment, or flying abroad for safety, he miraculously rises to a peak of fame.

He is discovered by the intellectual grandees of Edinburgh and invited down to the capital. He rides there on a borrowed pony.

He who was being crushed by shame and penury and spurned by all, even his village acquaintances, is now lionised by lords and ladies. At his approach the doors of rank and fashion now open noiselessly, "on golden hinges turning."

Nothing just like this has happened before or since in the history of literature.

Far from being embarrassed by his new surroundings, the poet conducts himself with dignity, as one whose unquestioned talent entitles him to this position among the quality. They find the supposedly uncouth ploughman more than a match for their wit.

But even here he whose play of soul and genius for poetic expression have lately been producing epigrams for tavern laughter makes a couple of slips—in each case at the expense of a minister of the Gospel.

The first is to compare unfavourably his reverend host's preaching with that of his colleague, and this in spite of the fact that the reputation of the former rested upon his eloquence in the pulpit. Burns pronounced his opinion in a tone so pointed and

decisive as to throw the whole company into embarrassment.

But the minister was a diplomat and politely agreed with Burns, who now not only realised his mistake, but saw also that a belated attempt to rectify it would only make the situation worse.

Then there was the duel with the controversially-minded clergyman at breakfast in an Edinburgh literary circle. The conversation turned on the poetic merit and pathos of "Gray's Elegy," of which Burns was enthusiastically fond.

The clergyman was remarkable for his eccentric notions. He started an ill-timed attack on the "Elegy." Burns defended it manfully, and urged his opponent to tell him the passages to which he objected. The other made several attempts to quote the poem, but blundered badly.

Burns seems to have displayed good-natured forbearance for a while, but his passionate nature, unused to social restraints, became exasperated by the fastidious criticisms and wretched quibblings. He roused himself, and with his fine eye flashing contempt and indignation, and with great vehemence, so totally unbecoming in that polite gathering, he burst forth :

*"Sir, I now perceive that a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and be after all a d—— block-head."*

\* \* \* \* \*

Flesh and spirit were always at war in Robert Burns. Some of the young bucks in Edinburgh lured him to the taverns, where he was again as loose and wanton as he was in Ayrshire.

He was born during a tempest, and became a



child of storm. His mother Agnes was described as possessing a red-headed temper, which was handed down to her son.

His father, a farmer, was a peasant saint, who determined that his first-born son Robert should waste no time in learning the fear of the Lord. On the morning after his birth he was formally baptized in the kitchen by the minister whose presence had been hurriedly obtained for the ceremony. There was no rule of the Church necessitating this haste, only the yearning of a parent that his son should be a Christian from birth.

Irascibility sometimes, and music at all times, surged in Robert, but his voice was untunable. His father could not teach him to sing the Psalms; nor could he keep his grown lad from going to the dancing school to improve his manners. To a strict Calvinist such a place was a half-way house on the road to damnation. Yet Burns persisted in his attendance, though he feared that it led his father to take a dislike to him.

Stevenson said that Burns was probably not so much devoted to religion in his youth as haunted by it. At a touch of sickness he would prostrate himself before God in "unmanly penitence."

This came out strongly in an early letter to his father about bidding farewell to all the pains and uneasiness and disquietudes of this weary life, for he is heartily tired of it all. "It is for this reason that I am more pleased with the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth verses, of the seventh chapter of the book of Revelation, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible."

He would not exchange the noble enthusiasm

with which they inspired him for all that the world had to offer. As for this world, he despaired of ever making a figure in it.

This strange and fearful letter of youthful melancholy was written several years before the publication of his poems. That at this age he should prefer these three verses to ten times as many elsewhere in the Bible is understandable, for they have a quality and beauty which have made them universal favourites :

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters : And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The sweet singer of Scotland, whose poetry springs clean and clear from the hills and the heather, whose music ripples as sweetly as the mountain stream, can hardly fail to be enraptured by words so rich in spiritual beauty, flowing as they do, in his youth, like fresh waters across his burning soul.

Despite his early ribaldry, the rich veins in his nature are turned Godwards by the natural scenery into which he is born.

But as he is the child of storm, he passes from the gentler moods of Nature and reproduces a tempest like that which raged on the night of his birth :

There is scarcely any earthly object which gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which raptures me—than to walk in the shelter of a high wood or plantation on a cloudy winter day and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain.

It is my best season for devotion; my mind is wrapt  
up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who in the pompous  
language of the Hebrew bard

Walks on the wings of the wind!

He addresses poems "To a Winter's Night," "To  
a Mountain Daisy," "To Ruin," "To a Haggis,"  
"To a Louse," "To the De'il," and to "Comin'  
thru the Rye." He catches the spirit of the fields  
and the streams:

Sweet are the banks, the banks of Doon,  
The spreading flowers are fair

'Twas even, dewy fields were green,  
On every blade the pearlis hung.

\* \* \* \* \*

Flesh continued her victorious war against the  
spirit of Robert Burns. His father, calling from  
his dying bed, declared that there was one of his  
children of whom he could not think without fear  
of the future. As he hurries weeping to the bed-  
side, Burns plaintively asks if he is the one who  
is meant. Who but Robert Burns?

But he composed some noble lines on his dead  
father, took his place as head of the house, led the  
family regularly to kirk, and sat gravely at the end  
of the pew. At home he conducted family prayers,  
remembering with admiration how his father used  
to take the Bible and say "Let us worship God."

He read the Scriptures solemnly, prayed extempore  
with earnestness and seeming power. Meanwhile  
the sordid tale of his early loves went on. The  
spirit wavered in its losing battle.

And, like every other Scotsman, Burns was a  
theological critic. A friend saw him on the after-  
noon of a Mauchline Sacrament day lounging on

horseback at the door of a public-house holding forth on religious topics to a whole crowd of country people, who became so shocked with his levities that they hissed him from the spot.

He excused his attitude by saying that at this time polemical theology was driving the country half mad; but he admits that, ambitious of shining on Sundays, he used to attack Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion that he raised the hue and cry of heresy against him—"which has not ceased to this hour."

He was more hurt by the condescensions shown to him by Jean Armour's parents, and by Jean's affront in destroying his written promise of an irregular marriage.

But his facility with women continued to keep him entangled. There was not a pretty girl in Tarbolton on whom he did not compose a song. And though his strong religious instincts still receded before his passions, he could not forget the Bible and the religion of his fathers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Highland Mary floated into his life.

On the second Sunday in May 1786 the two resorted to a sequestered spot by the banks of the River Ayr to spend one day of ardent love.

They stood on either side of the burn, dipped their hands in the stream, and, holding a Bible between them, vowed eternal fidelity. They parted—and never met again.

Yet Highland Mary was the true love of his life. She set out one day to seek her faithless lover, but a malignant fever seized her, and she went to an early grave.

Her Bible, in two volumes, which Burns gave her on the day they parted, has been discovered. In the first volume he had inscribed (from Leviticus): "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely. . . . I am the Lord." That in the second volume ran: "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but perform unto the Lord thine oath" (taken from the Sermon on the Mount).

And now because of Highland Mary's death Burns fell into a state of great misery, although there were perhaps two other loves interwoven in his affections at this time. He wrote of the "pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures . . . even in the hours of social mirth my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner." What a revealing sentence as to his spiritual state!

Yet while these stabs of remorse assailed him the fountain of his poetry continued to pour forth the divine melody. Both Scott and Byron saw the concentrated essence of a thousand love-tales in those poignant lines to Clarinda:

Had we never loved sae kindly,  
Had we never loved sae blindly,  
Never met—or never parted—  
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

And—here is the true Burns—for it is just in this state that he finds sure evidence of faith. He says:

I think I have every evidence for the reality of a life  
beyond the stunted bourne of our present existence. . . .

Of Thou, great unknown Power! Who has

lighted up reason in my breast and blessed me with immortality!

I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of Thy works.

Yet Thou hast never left me nor forsaken me.

\* \* \* \* \*

But he goes passionately forward, "the observed of all observers."

His face is arresting. Curved, firm, yet sympathetic lips, with a suggestion of merriment at their outer edge, they are almost Byronic in their beauty; and there is indeed a noticeable resemblance in the chin and contour of the face to the author of "Don Juan" himself. No wonder that Burns, like Byron, had such a way with women.

His eyes were eloquent and glowing—the most brilliant eyes probably ever seen in Scotland. As a youth Sir Walter Scott met Burns in Edinburgh, and for him the meeting became "the immortal memory."

He noticed the strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments:

The eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large and of a dark cast which glowed (I say literally glowed) when he spoke with feeling or interest.

I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time.

The "blink of Burns' black eye" caused young men to quail into silence, "lest he pickle and preserve them in sarcastic song." His note-books contained sarcastic references to some of those noblemen with whom he had sat at dinner in Edinburgh, but who had grown indifferent to him; and certain of

those audacious epigrams circulated freely, and to their great annoyance.

He even dared to answer the rather condescending invitation of a noble peeress by asking if "the esteemed poet" might bring with him "the esteemed pig." These stinging sallies, his boon companions, and the end of the nine days' wonder, resulted in a chillier reception on his second visit to the capital.

\* \* \* \* \*

In sickness again he takes to the Bible once more—"tooth and nail," as he puts it. He has "got through the five books of Moses and am half-way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book!"

He seemed to spend his life between sinning and feeling remorse for sin, if not between sinning and repenting.

His publisher dallied and there was acid correspondence; but Burns was presently gratified to receive over five hundred pounds for his poems, which was fortune indeed for a rustic who spent his life fighting the daily threats of penury.

Like most Scotsmen, Burns had a strong sense of family attachment and he immediately sent nearly two hundred pounds to his needy brother.

"I was conscious," he said with droll irreverence, "that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that the throwing of a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour might help to smooth matters at The Grand Reckoning."

\* \* \* \* \*

Burns had no affectation.

His poetic sentiments were deep and manly.

He turned his natural sympathies for all living things into liquid harmony. His love for the animal kingdom, the wounded hare, the wee mouse, was as sincere as his rapture over flowers, rivulets, green fields and mountain scenery :

Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing  
 That in the merry months of spring  
 Delighted me to hear thee sing,  
 What comes of thee ?  
 Where wilt thou cower thy chattering wing  
 And close thy 'ee ?

He was the gay lover of all Nature, and until he began to sink into dissipation the grandest and brightest lover of life. Then, like Hamlet, he went soliloquising : Day follows night, and night comes after day only to curse . . . with life which gives . . . no pleasure. And yet the awful, dark termination of that life is something at which he recoils. . . .

Can it be possible (he now demands) that when I resign this frail feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence ?

When the last gasp of agony has announced that I am no more to those who know me, and the few who loved me; when this cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghostly corse is resigned into the earth, now to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a rotten clod, shall I be warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed ?

Carlyle said that Burns' religion was " the Great Perhaps." But it was more than a " Perhaps "; it was a yearning passing into an almost certain hope :

Ye venerable sages and holy flamens (he cries) is there any probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories, of another world beyond death; or are they all alike baseless visions and fabricated fables ?



Would to God I as firmly believed it as I ardently wish it !

Jesus Christ, Thou amiablest of characters ! I trust Thou art no impostor, and that Thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave is not one of the many impositions which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind.

I trust that in Thee "shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

\* \* \* \* \*

Religious epigrams sparkled in his poetry.

Even in "Tam o' Shanter," that "wildest piece of mad humour" which he considered his greatest poem, he must suddenly break away as "the fun grew fast and furious" to sound forth that haunting protestation :

But pleasures are like poppies spread !  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed !  
Or like the snowfall in the river  
A moment white—then melts for ever.

He warned his "young friend" that "an atheist's laugh's a poor exchange for Deity offended."

In that simple poem of manly piety "The Cotter's Saturday Night" he expressed the truths of natural religion; but what he so beautifully described in that picture of a temperate home was the faith of his father and not his own. In this poem was born the proverb now so popular in our language :

An honest man's the noblest work of God.

He told as simple truth that "they never sought in vain who sought the Lord aright"; and in his "Bard's Epitaph," composed about ten years before his death, he proclaimed what he rarely practised :

Know prudent, cautious, self-control  
Is wisdom's root.

He was a lover of justice, truth, honesty and liberty. He lamented that we knew nothing or next to nothing of the substance of our souls, and thus could not account for the seeming caprice which made us pleased with this thing or struck with that. . . .

Tell me, dear Friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery which, like the Aeolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident?

Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature, and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.

\* \* \* \* \*

He can turn swiftly from such solemnities to advise "The Henpecked Husband" in words recalling "The Taming of the Shrew":

Were such the wife had fallen to my part  
I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart.

When he returned from his first visit to Edinburgh the country was ringing with his praises. His head was not turned, but those of the Armour family were. He was disgusted with the craven attitude of the family that had spurned him so contemptuously and invoked the law against him.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of anything generous; yet the stateliness of the patricians in Edinburgh and the damned servility of my plebeian brethren who perhaps formerly eyed me askance, since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit with my species.

I have bought a pocket Milton, which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the

sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance in hardship in the great Personage, *Satan*.

So he took up the post of Excise officer, and in selecting his farmhouse he made a poet's choice. Stern to professional smugglers, he gave friendly warnings to some of the women of the villages who incautiously kept illicit stills. He carried a double-handed sword, and boarded a ship that had intruded into British waters with guns aboard.

A poet with a sword ! A babe with a bomb !

He was not so prolific in these latter days. But he still wrote a good deal, and often about religion, for he never lost his sense of the spiritual. Yet he felt that many of the mistakes of his fellows were "owing to their ignorance of themselves"—a judgment which no one would dispute to-day. But even when the plea of ignorance cannot be accepted he can say tenderly :

Then gently scan your brother man,  
Still gentler sister woman :  
Though they may gang a kennin wrong,  
To step aside is human.

Writing to a woman friend he now sets forth his creed in more definite form :

Religion is . . . surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich.

That there is an incomprehensible Great Being, to whom I owe my existence, and that He must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery and consequent outward deportment of this creature that He has made : these are, I think, self-evident propositions.

That there is a real and eternal distinction between

virtue and vice, and consequently that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave; must, I think, be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment's reflection.

I will go further, and affirm that from the sublimity, excellence and purity of His doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the aggregate wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though to appearance He was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species—therefore *Christ was from God*.

The punch-bowl given to Burns by the Armour family as a wedding-present was partly to blame for his lapses from these high ideals, though he clung to them and affirmed that whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, "that is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity."

He believed that every honest upright man of whatever sect would be accepted by the Deity :

My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of Jamie Dean's grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire :

"Lord, grant that we may lead a gude life ! for a gude life makes a gude end ; at least it helps weel."

Yet one day he took a peep through the "dark postern of time" long since elapsed, and saw a vista of thoughtlessness, weakness and folly.

My life reminded me of a ruined temple : what strength, what proportions in some parts ! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruin in others !

I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies and said :

“ Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.”

I rose, eased and strengthened.

I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man.

He confessed to Mrs. Dunlop that all his life religion had not only been his chief dependence, but his dearest enjoyment ! He had been the victim of wayward follies, but alas ! he had ever been more the fool than the knave ! He said that “ A mathematician without religion is a probable character, but an irreligious poet is a monster ! ”

He talks of heaven :

A mind pervaded, actuated and governed by purity, truth and charity, though it does not merit heaven, yet is an absolute necessary pre-requisite, without which heaven can neither be obtained nor enjoyed ; and by Divine promise such a mind shall never fail of attaining everlasting life ; hence the impure, the deceiving, and the uncharitable extrude themselves from eternal bliss by their unfitness for enjoying it.

Of course Burns was right !

He has been described as a Theist, but not a Christian. But he wrote with a sure pen when he said that :

The Supreme Being has put the immediate administration of all this, for wise and good ends known only to Himself, into the hands of Jesus Christ. . . .

A great Personage Whose relation to Him we cannot comprehend, but Whose relation to us is that of a Guide and Saviour. . . .

And Who, except for our own obstinacy and mis-

conduct, will bring us all, through various ways, and by various means, to bliss at the last.

\* \* \* \* \*

And yet Burns' last words on his death-bed would seem to have been an angry curse shot at the man who had reminded him of his poverty with a bill for his "Volunteer's" uniform.

Nevertheless by various ways and by various means, as the poet would have it, Burns too may have been led to immortal bliss at last.

And perhaps that other characteristic saying as he lies dying, that pathetically quaint request that the awkward squad be not allowed to fire over his grave, words which should have moistened many a kindly eye down here, preceded him aloft—to make the angels smile.

\* \* \* \* \*

His admirers say he's "a man for a' that," and they meet together annually to toast his "immortal memory." But none can improve on his own words :

#### A BARD'S EPITAPH

The poor inhabitant below  
Was quick to learn and wise to know,  
And keenly felt the friendly glow  
And softer flame;  
But thoughtless follies laid him low  
And stain'd his name.

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# MARSHAL FOCH





## MARSHAL FOCH

He is a sceptic : He believes nothing :  
therefore he will come to nothing.  
*Foch.*

“ *HELP ! Marshal Foch is attacking me !* ” . . .  
Not a cry of despair from defeated Germans retreating in disorder on the Western Front, but one of mock appeal to his Ministers from Briand, the French Premier.

Foch had a blunt way with him. He had been telling Briand some home truths about the French Republic, and telling them with his characteristic courage and aggressiveness.

He had expressed the opinion that the new German Republic would teach the French how a Republic should be governed.

Several times had Foch found it necessary to attack his political masters since that famous “ Eleventh ” when he forced the Germans to crave an Armistice.

He attacked his own War Premier, Clemenceau — “ The Tiger,” Mr. Lloyd George and President Wilson. For they proposed, in the Peace Treaty, to deprive France of the protection of the Rhine by not withdrawing Germany’s frontier to the east bank of that river.

“ The Tiger ” joined with the other leaders of the Peace Conference in opposing him. Foch demanded a hearing. A wizard in planning a military campaign, he carefully planned his attack on the Peace Conference at Versailles.

His arguments were arranged in close and rapid formation, as though troops about to storm an enemy position. He reasoned quickly and hotly and poured in his reserves.

Foch won his victories with deadlier weapons than words. And the Peace Conference refused to budge; his own Premier and politicians fled. Presently they halted and accepted a treaty whereby England and America agreed to guarantee France against German aggression.

Foch counter-attacked, declaring that such a treaty would be worthless. And when the American Government declined to ratify it, Foch was proved to have been right; he had attacked in vain.

\* \* \* \* \*

"There is no salvation outside the offensive," was one of his war phrases. "Attack!" became the favourite word in his military dictionary.

A harassed officer, hoping for reinforcements, sent him the despairing message that he could neither hold out nor retire, and was coldly reminded that there was one other thing he could do — "*attack to-morrow morning!*"

To another he said: "There are three courses open. You can retire, stand fast or attack. I forbid the first. You can take your choice of the other two."

These orders were not so devastatingly ruthless as the judgment he delivered after patiently listening to another officer who had detailed the plight of his command.

The officer said that if attacked the men must retire; their position was so bad that it was impossible to hold on.

His biographer, Sir George Anton, tells us that one could read Foch's thoughts by the way he smoked a cigar. He chewed the end in silence until the officer had finished; then relighting it, he set his cap at a right-angle and pronounced :

"You must not retire; you must hold on at all costs."

The officer was aghast.

"That means—we must all die."

Foch stared hard at the stump of his cigar and threw it away.

*"Exactly! You've hit it," he said, then walked away, leaving his subordinate staring after him.*

His ruthlessness had been deliberate. The quaint kindly glance, habitual with him, had been purposely banished. For he knew that his first task was to teach that, when it is necessary, a soldier's job is to die and not avoid death.

Human and kindly at heart, Foch knew that in war these instincts could not be given expression.

To "attack" meant attacking allies as well as enemies if it was in the general interest.

When the Belgian troops, at the Yser, were exhausted and about to retire, Foch spoke frankly and crisply to King Albert himself; and afterwards, when victory was won without retiring, the King expressed his gratitude and said that he bore no malice. Foch had behaved in the only way that could have met the situation.

The Channel ports were saved.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the difficult task of compelling others to fight without giving way Foch was outstanding and supreme. He was a tenacious fighter himself, and

hated to receive orders to retire as much as he disliked giving them. He would command his troops to hang on and on to the outmost edge of a position and to the last minute of life, as he did at the Marne, at the Yser and on the Somme. Then when defeat and victory wavered in the balance he would rally his men to a final and victorious attack.

"The moral factor is the most important element in war," he affirmed. "The will to victory sweeps all before it." When a hundred thousand troops retired before another hundred thousand troops it was due solely to lack of faith in their power to win. There was no difference in two such armies save in the presence or absence of this overmastering conviction. To lose confidence in oneself was to give the victory to one's neighbour.

Therefore this tenacious little General with the abrupt manner and the powerful head, which looked like a flower too big for its stalk, incessantly sought to infuse his troops with a spirit of Coueism and to galvanise them with an unflinching faith in themselves that should persist through the hottest fight.

When the British Fifth Army is overwhelmed he hurries to Gough's headquarters, wastes no time on sympathy—though there is good occasion for it—and says sternly that it is not the British custom to retreat. That is Foch, in Supreme Command, embodying the will to win. Really an actor—acting ever the rôle of the victor.

Foch knew that he must show unbending strength and sternness if his subordinates were not themselves to bend and break.

Gough may be unlucky, but Foch dare not admit it at this time. Kindness and sympathy breed weakness during the ordeal of battle.

This human tendency to waver and run must be relentlessly fought during every waking minute. When that tendency is vanquished in himself and his subordinates the war will be over, and peace, so much to be preferred to war, will have come to bless mankind. For the sake of a world in pain he hardens himself :

"Victory goes always to those who deserve it," he snaps. And so he inspires, from defeat to sweeping victory, the greatest armies the world has ever seen.

\* \* \* \* \*

What room is there here, in a man whose seeming confidence is in the "will to victory" and in the "arm of flesh," for love towards his neighbour and fidelity to the Prince of Peace? Can this apparently flint-hearted General have a soul? We shall see.

During the early days of the War there came a message to his headquarters that made him sick with sorrow.

He asked his staff to retire for half an hour, while he recovered from the news that his son, Private Foch, had been killed at Gorcy on the Meuse.

When that interval had passed he recalled his officers and resumed work. His sympathetic subordinates expressed their sorrow.

But he cut them short.

"Yes, yes, enough of that! We must get on with the War!"

Has he no soul? Wait until he has freed France

from the invader and has said farewell to his demobilised armies. Then watch him upon the anniversary of his son's death, as he leaves his home in Brittany, and goes on pilgrimage to Gorcy, where, uncovering, he kneels in silent prayer by the grave of his lost son.

Has he a soul? Watch him when he returns to his old school of St. Clement's, in Metz, as he tells the students that life may prove to them what it has proved to him.

The greatest heights will be accessible to you. But you must work. And work hard to reach them. *Go to your chapel, and there look to the Light without which nothing that you do can avail.*

Thereupon he went to the old oaken pew, and kneeling there set them an example of the worship without which all their efforts would be fruitless.

Marshal Foch had keen memories of his student days at St. Clement's. The Franco-Prussian War was going on while he studied there, and the Germans invested and captured the city.

Burning with resentment against the invader, he paced the streets of Metz. In after years he was to pace the same streets with General Weygand; pace them in the snow which fell after the Armistice, and talk over all the wonderful events that had happened to his world since the days of his youth.

He still remembered with loathing the clank of Prussian sabres in the streets and the swagger of Prussian officers.

Especially did he remember that bitter day when a salvo from a cannon at the fort set the school windows vibrating and brought the pupils bounding to their feet.

They saw their superintendent, with bowed head, join his hands and cross his fingers as though in prayer. He told the students that the abominable thing signified the treaty which transferred Metz and their school from the soil of France to the German Empire.

That night all the students in St. Clement's prayed for France—that her glory might be restored to her. And none prayed more fervently than the little son of a pious Pyrenean mother—Ferdinand Foch.

Could anyone have foreseen that he was to become the master strategist to break the German yoke and restore the city to France? The strange thing is that at least one person foresaw the event. There are seers in every generation.

A friend of the Foch family, a doctor, standing with his children at the *Arc de Triomphe*, where, later, the body of the victorious Marshal was to lie in state beside the Unknown Warrior, caught a whisper from the Unseen and prophesied :

One day we shall reconquer Germany. . . .

I can't say how, but I am certain that it will be young Ferdinand Foch who will lead our victorious troops under this glorious arch.

\* \* \* \* \*

Foch was a good-looking boy with regular features and clear, steady blue eyes of bright intelligence. But he was to grow a long moustache, which, coupled with a protruding jaw, would have made him look positively brutal but for the spiritual radiance of his countenance.

He was by nature sympathetic, genial, but impulsive. He had the epicure's sensitiveness to food, but with a strange horror of green peas. He shudders at

sight of them on his plate. But his parents insist, and so he swallows them at a gulp.

Foch worships Napoleon. As a boy he must even search through the lives of Napoleon to see if he has visited a certain holiday resort before he can contemplate spending his own holidays there with unstinted pleasure.

But he is gifted with a clear vision which does not recoil from the mistakes of his hero. He sees clearly that among other errors Napoleon should not have captured the Pope, and that the return from Elba was indefensible. He called it a mad escapade, which made another war between France and the European Powers inevitable.

Had Foch been sent to Elba, he would have stayed there until he was recalled. And borne his exile with philosophic calm. Just as he bore the humiliations which came to him before his apotheosis. For more than once he was side-tracked, but he continued to do his duty as he saw it.

When he heard that others had declined lesser commands he was contemptuous; he characterised it as mere pride, saying that he would have commanded a division rather than remain idle. One general had declined the offer of an army corps, because he wanted an army.

"But why an army?" asked Foch, explaining that greatness depended on the way one exercised a command; not on the size of it. And it was never a humiliation to command French soldiers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though he made no parade of his faith, he was ever deeply religious; and quick to point out the dangers of those who walked by sight and not by faith.



He summed up a promising politician by saying :  
“ He is a sceptic. He believes nothing; therefore he will come to nothing ! ”

In those early days at Metz he cherished the desire to live until he could hang his sword in the Cathedral as an offering. His early motto was knowledge and conscience; but later he reversed the order of the two—conscience, then knowledge.

Foch believed that religious idealism gave men the needed strength to do their duty. By acting rightly towards his fellows man offers perpetual homage to an ever-present and observant God. He knew that in the French Army his religion might retard his advancement, but he was prepared to accept this with perfect composure.

His first military setback was in fact due to his religion. It came when he was a lecturer at the *Ecole de Guerre*, to which he had been appointed in the year that Dreyfus was degraded on the barrack square as a traitor.

A politico-religious controversy was going on at that period, and was seriously disturbing the French Army. There had been trouble with the bishops, and the officers who professed religious principles were unpopular.

Foch saw that his career was in danger, but he refused to swerve from his rule of life—“ Do what you ought.” He was dismissed from his college as a religious reactionary and sent to Laon, where he was kept under observation, and although his name was on the list for promotion, he was deprived of advancement for several years.

But “ The Tiger ” had an eye for a good man, and was determined to bring him back. Only

there was that religious bother which had caused his dismissal.

He told Foch that they didn't like him when he was at the Staff College because he was said to have favoured Catholic students.

Foch denied the charge. He did not even know who the Catholic students were. "The Tiger" named a few, and Foch pointed out that they had all done well since. Not favouritism but merit had guided their superior. Nevertheless he must inform "The Tiger" that his own brother was a—religious.

"I don't care a d—— what he is. You will make a first-rate Commandant of the School." And the appointment was made.

There were other sharp exchanges between the two. At the request of Lord Haig the Supreme Command was offered to Foch and accepted.

"The Tiger" was sarcastic. Congratulating Foch, he said that at last the Marshal had got what he wanted.

Foch met his Premier's sarcasm with another.

"I thank you for your generosity, Monsieur. You present me with a lost battle which I have now got to win."

Not long after, when Foch was beginning to make his strategy effective, "The Tiger" unexpectedly arrived at the Marshal's headquarters and demanded to see him. The staff said that Foch was at Mass, but they would call him.

The worldly-wise Premier stopped them.

"Don't disturb him. His religion has served him too well already. I'll wait."

Foch and his brother Germain—whom he had

mentioned to "The Tiger" as a possible obstacle to his preferment—were greatly attached to each other.

Once in early life they discussed their vocations. Foch felt no call to the religious life, but he was definitely of the opinion that it was his brother's duty to give himself to the Church.

"We shall both be serving France," said the soldier. "You shall pray for her, and I shall fight for her. And"—here spoke the true Foch—"who knows which shall offer the better service?"

After his brother's death, and while Parisians in their thousands were filing past the door of the great Marshal, Germain spent hours alone praying in the death-chamber.

\* \* \* \* \*

Foch's second setback followed the "blood bath on the Somme," where he had again distinguished himself. Not religion this time, but rumour and impatience side-tracked him. General dissatisfaction was being expressed with the French Higher Command.

Foch, and presently Joffre, were deprived of their posts, with the result that the war was considerably lengthened.

Foch called on Joffre, and their meeting must have been stormy, for those outside heard voices raised within. Joffre was heard to say that both he and Foch were too old.

Stories had been circulated that Foch was tired and ill. Moreover that he was a mystic.

"What," demanded Foch, "has mysticism to do with commanding the French Army?"

But he knew that when a dog had to be

killed they must first say he was mad. And religious mania was the most effective charge to bring against a conscientious and competent general.

Again he was shelved—as a mystic; which he probably was.

It now looked as though there could be no future for the Marshal. Yet he had been named several times as the man who would lead the Allies to victory in the world's greatest war; and English Generals had prophesied as much long before it started. In 1910, Lord Roberts stated publicly :

We shall have a frightful war in Europe, and England and France will have the hardest experience of their existence. They will, in fact, see defeat very near, but the war will finally be won by the genius of a French General named Ferdinand Foch.

Let those who scoff at prophecy in ancient days read that inspired prophecy made by Lord Roberts within our own memory. A year before it was uttered Sir Henry Wilson said in his jaunty manner to his colleagues in Whitehall :

I've got a French General outside, General Foch, boss of their Staff College. . . .

This fellow's going to command the Allied Armies when the great war comes.

\* \* \* \* \*

"This fellow" is now about to retire in disgrace because the battle of the Somme did not end in Berlin. His first impression of Wilson had been that he was just an English fop with elastic-sided boots.

Presently he was to find in him a great English soldier and a trusted comrade. Wilson is one of

the few men in whose presence Foch will condescend to unbend.

When the two are alone together they will stop and gossip, exchange military caps, and strut about the Marshal's room like schoolgirls displaying new Spring millinery.

\* \* \* \* \*

In supreme command and having stemmed the German onrush outside Amiens, Foch sees that he can now take the initiative and do what no one else had hitherto believed possible—end the war in 1918, and a year ahead of time.

He disagrees with the German strategy, which relies upon breaking through at one point alone. No single battle, he says, can win this war.

It must be a series of battles, a bits-and-pieces victory, with the French Armies biting here, the Americans there, the Belgians further north and the British achieving the impossible by smashing through the impenetrable Hindenburg Line.

The German front strains and snaps under these united hammer blows. Foch tells his staff that the position "over there" must be "infernal." Unless they soon ask for the Armistice he has already prepared for them, they will be trapped in a snare that will make Sedan look an excusable misadventure.

Foch has decided that the bridge-heads over the Rhine must be included in the Armistice terms. Haig objects, fearing that the Germans will not accept, and that the war will then be prolonged with further loss of life.

Foch explains to him why this view is the wrong one. The modest British General has not realised

how tremendous have been his victories against the Hindenburg Line.

Never once had Foch contemplated defeat. Clear, resolute and pitiless orders, accompanied by the will to win, have achieved complete victory.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was said of Foch that he had something new in his brain every morning and that he used to communicate it to Weygand with the remark :

“ This came to me when shaving.”

A pipe, a cigar, a packet of shag, seemed to be the limit of his indulgence—he lived a life bordering on asceticism. For poetry and literature he cared little. Religion and war—they were his two great interests.

When a letter came asking for his views on the immortality of the soul he decided not to reply, but gave his own view privately. “ Happy are those who are born believers. For myself I cannot doubt.”

His prayers were more an act of self-surrender and adoration than spoken supplications.

When the Armistice was signed he told “ The Tiger ” that his work was ended. The politicians could now take on. By doing his utmost as a duty, he felt that he had only paid the homage due from him to his Maker.

His last words were : “ Allons-y.” “ *Let us go.*” The end of the great war-marshal was—Peace.

\* \* \* \* \*

One who was a friend of the late Marshal Foch, but who desires for personal reasons to remain anonymous, has sent me the following stories, which vividly illustrate the spirituality of the great French

soldier. I think they have never been told before.

It was, as far as I remember, in the summer of 1921.

Early one morning I was strolling down the Boulevard Malesherbes, towards the church of St. Augustin. On passing the church I saw Foch coming down the steps, and stopped to speak to him.

He had been to Mass and Communion, probably to the nine o'clock service. We fell into step, and went towards one of his favourite spots, Parc Monceau. We were talking casually when suddenly I said :

"But you are without breakfast, Maréchal. Don't let me keep you."

He gave me one of his quick looks. "No, no," he said more to himself. "I can well wait until lunch time. I have made my Communion."

There was something peculiar about the way he said this, and his eyes had assumed the dreamy yet so luminous look I was beginning to know. There were moments when, thinking or speaking of his faith, his soul seemed to leap out of his eyes in a glory of light.

I hardly dared question him, for he disliked questions. So we strolled on until we came to the park, and he led me to a secluded seat. There, without any prompting, he resumed the conversation.

"Bread and wine," he said slowly, "the heritage of our Lord. What more satisfying food can man have? Once to my own knowledge it has been found to be all that men needed during nearly three days of suffering, hunger and thirst."

He was clearly talking to himself, and I dared not interrupt.

"Around La Feré Champenoise," he went on, "during those unforgettable days of the Marne. . . . I thought at first when I heard that story it was just the peculiar tension of our nerves; yet later I took the trouble to question and verify. And I discovered the most convincing testimony, that of the doctor and stretcher-bearers who finally found the men. And they were not only Frenchmen, but there were several Germans among them. All had the same story to tell. . . ."

And now I ventured to ask him for the story.

"I'll tell it you. It may do you good. You may need just such a story."

\* \* \* \* \*

And here it is as told by Marshal Foch.

"I suppose that small village where it happened had been taken and retaken three or four times. When we finally swept over it we did not stop to mop up or organise: we went on, for it was a heap of ruins.

"The man who told me the story was a sergeant in a line regiment—a 'Parigot'—sceptical, not to say wholly ignorant of religion. After the troops had swept on and night had come, he awoke on the battlefield suffering acutely—his left leg was shattered beyond repair.

"The whole battlefield seemed awake too—you know how it was: all the suffering of mankind concentrated on that one unhallowed spot. My sergeant said he cursed the war and his generals and his God, for he was suffering such anguish.

"Yet there must have been a strain of unselfish-



ness in him, of desire to serve, for presently he became aware of other sufferers around him, and he tried to crawl towards them and to help. They must have all gone through their own hell too.

"They could hear the battle passing away from them, whilst the rest of the Army was far behind. Ambulances might be hurrying towards them, but they might never be picked up—perhaps they were going to die there.

"The sergeant told me that now something queer happened to him: he felt he did not matter like the others, and therefore he must assume charge and do his best to save them.

"They were just on the outskirts of the village, which was a heap of ruins and burning in places. He could make out one building which was more or less undamaged, and which he rightly took to be a church.

"He must have been powerfully helped by God's grace, for he succeeded in rounding up a small company of wounded, some of them atrociously mutilated, and in getting them into the church. To this day I cannot imagine how he did it. Neither can anybody to whom I have told the story. That church had been a German dressing-station, and it was now a slaughter-house.

"Inside the church he found some soiled bandages and scattered medical supplies. There was little enough, for the Germans were almost worse off than his own company.

"The sergeant said that at this moment he felt no pain, only the imperious urge to ease the suffering of these men. How he set to work I do not know. He did not know himself. But with the

aid of one of the least wounded Germans he somehow bandaged and tended everybody—that is to say, all the living, for there were many dead among them.

“The church had suffered several direct hits, and only the outer walls were standing; but the main altar was undamaged; and there was above it a picture of Jesus with hands extended as though to bless.

“The sergeant said that he really did not know what made him, at the price of great efforts and suffering, arrange all his charges in a semi-circle at the foot of the steps leading to the altar—but this is what he did. And their plight was awful. They were half insane with terrible thirst, for they had been fighting for five days with hardly any food or drink. There seemed no hope, for none knew if any of our units would come through that place.

“Men began to rave. One of the Germans muttered prayers and called upon God to come down and save them. Another, a French soldier, was delirious, and kept talking about life in his village, of his mother baking new bread and of the new wine being made, as the vintages were due then, you remember. There was not one drop of water, not one morsel of bread, nor food of any kind in the church.

“My sergeant said that his feeling was one of such intense tenderness towards his fellow sufferers that it obliterated all else. He would gladly have opened his own veins for their benefit, and I believe him. He was very weary, of course, and as he lay among the others, suffering dumbly, he said that

he was looking straight at the picture of Our Lord above the altar.

"They had a stump of candle, but it was a starry, moonlit September night—that September was really glorious, you remember—and the roof of the church was off. He said that the light round the picture and streaming down on the altar and on the sorry company assembled there was very strange. He said that he felt the light *entering into him*, and strange thoughts came to him.

"He did not know how to pray, he said, but he began talking to the Figure above the altar. I remember his words quite clearly—they have stuck in my memory :

"‘Jesus Christ,’ he said, ‘I do not know You, but You must know me, if what the priest says is true. They say You know all men for what they are. Well, I am a pretty rotten specimen, and I am not worthy of being heard by You. But these others—I don’t know them—they are sure to be better than I. You don’t want them to suffer and die here like dogs. They have been fighting like devils, but for a good cause. The Germans as well; they are not Germans any more. Jesus Christ, don’t hold that against them—they are just poor broken men.

"‘That boy there who is raving about new bread and new wine, he is a good lad. He has been taught how to pray by his mother. He does not pray now because he is off his head by suffering. That is why I, who am unworthy, must speak to You. The Abbé said the other day that You had bread and wine to give to men so that they may live. *Eh bien*, Jesus Christ, give us bread and

wine so that we may live. Not to me, perhaps, for I am a great sinner, a braggart, but to these others and the Germans also. . . .”

Foch stopped and gave one of his blazing looks.

“Don’t you think this was a magnificent prayer?” he asked. “One of abnegation and humility such as the Apostles might have prayed!”

He went on:

“My sergeant said that as he spoke he had no doubt but that the picture of Christ above the altar heard, and that He would answer presently. His faith at that moment was so vital that he added a few words: ‘You have heard me,’ he said, ‘and You are taking pity on these men. *C’est, mon Christ,* I am content and I thank You. I knew that You could do it.’

“The affirmation of faith, you perceive!” said Foch and proceeded:

“He was quite clear as to what followed. *The light in the church became stronger, and the wounded ranged before it in one powerful beam, like a search-light, only more beautiful; and in that light the Figure above the altar moved and came down the steps with hands extended, and bent over each one of the wounded in turn—feeding them with pieces of bread and giving them wine to drink out of a cup.*

“The sergeant insisted there was a loaf of bread and a large cup of wine. And I asked him, ‘Did you have your share, sergeant?’ ‘*Ab, mon Général,* He went by me twice without giving me anything; so I thought to myself, there is not enough for all, but never mind, the others will be all right.’

“‘And did you not grudge the Germans their

share?' I asked. He looked surprised: '*Mais, non, mon Général.* They were not Germans any more. They were wounded men, and very hungry and thirsty.' But I wanted to know whether he finally had had something to eat. He said there was enough for everybody. He had received a large piece of bread and a long draught of wine.

"'And how did it taste?' I asked, said Foch, and he replied:

"'Like nothing you can describe. For it was not like food and drink you swallow and feel going down inside: *it seemed to go everywhere—into your brain, into your heart, into your veins. It was like the light after the darkness of night, and like everything dear and beautiful. It cannot be described. You would not understand, mon Général,*' he said simply.

"He did not remember much of what happened after this. All of them slept on and off, and when they were awake they talked like brothers reunited after a long absence.

"'We all talked—Germans and French. They were quite peaceful and contented, and they suffered little. Nobody asked whether they would be rescued or not: the Figure above the altar was still there, and it seemed that was all that mattered.'

"It was almost three days later that an ambulance lumbered that way and found them. The doctor—I have interviewed him, and he told me that he for one had no doubt that the story is true—wondered how they could have survived without food or drink, mutilated and mangled as they were. That was why the sergeant, supported by all the others, was led to tell that they had received the bread and wine. The doctor said the fact that none

of the men suffered infection, in spite of the most terrible wounds, was miraculous; at least some of them should have died."

\* \* \* \* \*

Foch's French was beautiful, very pure and precise; short sentences, direct, crisp; the speech of a professor bent on driving knowledge into his pupils in the clearest way possible. He told me this story almost in one breath, but giving the facts without digressing.

I asked him some questions. Did he feel sure that the story was true?

"Of course," he said; "there could be no doubt about it. Is not everything possible to Notre Seigneur? Is not the prayer of faith enough to bring Him down from heaven? One man could have suffered an hallucination—not a company of men of such alien races as French and Germans."

But what did he think had happened to that sergeant? Why did he feel as he did about the Germans?

Foch smiled—he had a most endearing smile, wistful and amused at the same time, a smile that distended the mouth into a line of tenderness and gave the eyes a glint of humour—his eyes became bluer when he smiled.

"What happened to him?" he repeated. "Grace happened to him. What happened to Saul *sur la route de Damas*? And, having grace, how could he think of the Germans as enemies? They were his brothers, *naturellement*, and he was eager to see them saved—he could not differentiate at that moment. I understood him quite well, though he thought I might not."

Again he smiled, this time with unmistakable humour. I wanted to know what became of the sergeant.

Foch seemed surprised. He thought for a moment.

"Well," he said, "I really do not know. It was some little while after the battle of the Marne that I heard and investigated the story. The sergeant was in a hospital in Paris. He lost his leg, and he was decorated. *Mais voyons*," he turned to me with animation, with that almost-visionary look in his eyes. "Does it matter much what happened to the *bodies* of the men who went through that spiritual experience? It was their souls that mattered."

"Nothing but the soul matters," I jested. "The body does not count."

"But it does, it does!" he snapped. "You have taken me wrong. I meant that after such a wonderful experience nothing could, to my mind, touch those men, and especially the sergeant. They had grace," he repeated heavily—"the grace of God. Nobody needs more than that."

But he added something which was interesting :

"You want to know exactly what happened to that sergeant who brought Notre Seigneur down in answer to prayer. Well, I believe he received at the moment a miraculous revelation of ideal brotherhood which made him attuned to the spirit of our Lord. When he said he was ready to open his veins for French and Germans alike, I verily believe that he was ready to do it. Faith must be like that—direct, unswerving, literal. And then he did not *hope* that our Lord would come down

to help them: he *knew*. He said, 'I *know* that You are coming down to help us.' And then the humility of sacrifice when he said that for himself he was too great a swaggerer, but the others were worthy."

"That is the kind of faith you have, Maréchal?"

He shook his head, his eyes dimming.

"*Ah, non, malheureusement*; otherwise, if I had that kind of absolute faith . . ." he broke off.

I knew what he meant: that if he had that kind of absolute faith, God would have restored his son to him.

Foch, who had a burning and all-pervading faith, considered himself as a great sinner, and deplored his own lack of faith. I heard him say once to a mutual friend who had been one of his officers and with whom he was talking of a battle:

"If I only had real faith I should have been able to win that battle and all the others without making men suffer in any way."

He believed, if any man ever did, in the faith that moves mountains. He was not obtrusive in expressing it, nor did he welcome discussions on religion. Yet on the few occasions on which I met him, for some reason he talked on nothing else. And from those who knew him I know that he would never let an occasion pass but what he would affirm his faith.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is another story told me by an officer—at the time it happened, he was Foch's liaison officer—of a visit by President Poincaré to the front. He arrived one morning at G.H.Q., and there was no Foch to receive him. The staff became rather



flustered and went to look for him. The liaison officer, also a Catholic, knew where to find him. Mass had been said much earlier, but Foch was expecting a long and troublous day, and the officer was confident that he had felt the need of longer prayer.

Sure enough, Foch was found kneeling alone at the altar-rail, not exactly praying, said the officer, but looking as though he were offering his soul to the crucified Christ. To the liaison officer the sight was so inspiring that, forgetting why he had come, he knelt with his chief and, as he said to me, "I tried hard to look and feel like him."

Foch never moved his eyes from the cross above the altar. A long moment passed. The officer could not capture the moment of exaltation. "How could I," he asked, "with the knowledge that the whole staff was fuming and fretting just outside?"

So, very respectfully, he leant towards Foch and whispered:

"*Mon Général, we are making Monsieur Poincaré wait. . . .*"

Foch never moved, not even a glance.

After another long moment he felt that the chief had finished praying; he rose and stood waiting. Foch rose slowly, looked once more at the cross, made the sign of the cross, bent his knee once more before the altar, and, with one of his swift movements, turned upon his liaison officer:

"What do you mean—making Monsieur Poincaré wait?" he snapped. "Am I expected, then, to say to Notre Seigneur: 'Sorry, there's somebody more important than you outside. I'll finish praying another time, when it is more convenient'?"

Outwardly Foch appeared hard and ruthless.

He cared not a fig for rank or position or for any worldly consideration whatever.

Yet when he refused to allow any man to disturb him when he was at church, or at his devotions, it was not, so the officer assured me, because it was the great General Foch who was praying, but because *God was there listening to him*.

It was the one and only time when it was unsafe to disturb Foch. Apart from this one could cut short his sleep or make him miss his meals. It did not matter.

But, concluded my correspondent, he was not to be disturbed where God was concerned !

\* \* \* \* \*

The same correspondent says :

My first meeting with Foch was in a Paris street. A French officer who was with me told the Marshal :

"She has just completed four years with the Intelligence Service."

Foch looked at me sharply and snapped :

"Why did you do it? Not for money?"

My officer friend excused me by saying that I was always against it, for it was very soiling work.

The Marshal's eyes were blue fire :

"Why should it be soiling? It is not the work, but the motive that matters."

Then, turning to me, he asked who I was with. I named the Supreme Chief of the French Secret Service.

"That is well," said Foch, his face relaxing. "A believer, if ever there was one. You could not go wrong under him." Then, with a tinge of kindly banter : "Did he advise you to pray before risking difficult work?"

I told him that he did.

We sat under a shady tree near the Invalides, and he asked me about my war service. But what interested him most was my attitude towards the Germans. Was my work done in a spirit of hatred or revenge? Hardly that, I said, for my chief had warned me against it.

Foch nodded :

"There can be no hatred in the discharge of a duty," he said. "Hatred is a red fog which, permeating the brain, makes one flounder where one should walk with a firm, decided tread. Since all duty is homage offered to God, it must be spiritually pure."

"But," I objected, "did you not hate the Germans when you fought them?"

He pondered :

"I did hate them when I was a lad at school, when they had conquered and humiliated France. And I swore oaths of revenge. Not later, though, for hatred is weakening; and I could not have discharged my higher duty towards France with hatred as the spur to drive me on."

"But how did you feel towards them during the dark hours of the war?"

He was a long time in answering :

"Determined to win, determined to crush them, yes! Though not as individuals—not even as a nation—only as the brutal force which had hurled itself against the world. And even that determination was subject to God's will."

Had he ever doubted that God's will was in favour of the Allies? No, he affirmed, he had never doubted God's ever-present aid; but he could not say that it meant certain victory.

I asked him if the saying was true that he always prayed before a battle, and he flashed me one of his surprised glances, almost quizzical, slightly amused.

"People say that?" he asked. "Ah, well, they are mistaken. If one has the habit of prayer at all, he prays always—no matter what the circumstances. Sometimes in graver moments one is led to deeper concentration in prayer."

Here he had one of his rare moments of animation, voice sharper, eyes twinkling:

"It does not mean that he says more words, but that he annihilates himself; he is wordless, the only conscious thought being 'Thy will be done.' That means, let me see Thy will and I'll accept it, obey it. A soldier's highest prayer is just that—obedience."

I led him further. If the war had resulted in defeat, how would he have felt? What would he have done?

His face underwent the most amazing change.

"Ah!" he said, in a laboured voice, "God would have helped me. I hope—I am sure—I believe—*je crois*."

No more. That *je crois* (I believe) of his: two words which he never used in any other sense, he used to himself, to reaffirm his faith. And to anyone who heard Foch utter them they are unforgettable!

I do not recall the time when he spoke of Christian Science. I think that it was at dinner. But he said sharply:

"There is only one kind of Christian science—faith in God and obedience."

He was not an easy man with whom to con-

verse, for only rarely did he talk at length. What he had to say was condensed into a few short sharp sentences. But one was made to feel that there were just these two motive forces in his life—duty to God and to his country. I said to the officer friend who had introduced us :

“ The Marshal would make a good martyr.”

“ H’m. Not until he had exhausted his strategy in saving his fellow-martyrs and himself.”

I told Foch the story of a friend of mine who, from being a member of one of the fastest sets in Paris, and past the age for conscription, had enlisted as a private. From the trenches he had written me the following letter :

I am cold, I am hungry, I am standing up to my knees in the icy mud, and I am thinking of the dear ones I left behind, so far away.

Opposite me in those other trenches there is a man like me. He is cold, he is hungry, he is standing up to his knees in the icy mud, and he is thinking of the dear ones he left behind, far away.

And that man, so like me, is an enemy, and I must kill him. . . ? Ah, no, no—I have found my God in the trenches—and He tells me this man is a brother . . . of mine.”

“ What of that,” I asked Marshal Foch ? “ Did he have a revelation ? One that would make him shirk his duty ? ”

Foch pondered, chewing the end of his everlasting cigar.

“ Not shirk his duty,” he dissented. “ Adapt it to the highest ideal of patriotism, if you like. God taught him to spare the man so like him, and to offer his life for his country and his brothers.”

I had no doubt that this man had received a

revelation from God. His comrades said that after it came he never killed again. He never even defended himself; he took prisoners; he offered himself for the most dangerous, the most foolhardy missions, and carried them through successfully. But though he carried his rifle with him, it was never loaded, and he used it for any purpose but that for which it was made.

And so I asked Foch why a man who acted thus never suffered, not even from wounds, not even any discomfort from the missions he undertook?

There was a sudden blue glint in the Marshal's eyes, a screwing up of the corners as though he could not see how one could have asked such a question.

"Could he have suffered in any way?" he asked, "since he had found God in the trenches and was walking with Him?"

He knew the story of this man very well, but made me go over it several times. The Germans were in Cerency, and his regiment was to attack the town. Volunteers were needed to get the necessary information. This man started just before dawn, and reached the outskirts of the town in a snowstorm. He lay in a shallow shell-hole. Soon he was just a snowdrift. He remained motionless all day with nothing but a flask of brandy as stimulant, and listened through a peep-hole. When, having been given up for lost, he returned, he said that he had talked with Christ, and that voices which could not have been heard normally had come to him, as though through a loud phonograph. He had felt neither cold nor drowsy and had returned unscathed.

“Naturally,” commented Foch; “he had God’s full protection.”

Foch also told me one of his favourite prayers—that used by General de Sonis, the “Miles Christi” of the Second Empire, who, said the Marshal, “had a harder lot than any of the generals who followed him. . . . I can have my religion in private; I can delight in it by myself. But he had to affirm it publicly, courageously, as courageously almost as the Apostles of old, in the midst of untold political and national suffering and stress, in such humiliating devastating defeat as history has never known. Also he was at Court, among people who, after all, believed little. I was on the battlefields—*where God walked!*”

And here is the prayer of de Sonis and of Foch :

My God, here I am before You—poor, small, stripped of everything.

Here I am, at Your feet, plunged in my nothingness.

I wish I had something to offer You—but I am nothing but misery.

You—You are my all, You are my whole wealth.

My God, I thank You for having decreed that I should be as nothing before You—I love my humiliation, my nothingness. I thank You for having deprived me of those few satisfactions of my self-conceit, of these few consolations of the heart. I thank You for deceptions, uneasiness, humiliations. I know I had need of them, and that earthly chattels might have kept me far from You.

O my God, be glorified, when You are trying me!

I love being broken, consumed, destroyed by You.

Destroy me more and more—annihilate me!

That I should be to the edifice of Your glory, not as the corner-stone, wrought and polished by the hand of the skilled workman, but as the obscure grain of sand, culled from the dust of the road.

My God, I thank You for having let me have a glimpse of the sweetness of Your comforting. I thank You for

having deprived me of it. All You do is good, all You do is just. I bless You in my poverty. I regret nothing but not having loved You enough. I desire nothing but that Your will be done.

You are my Master, and I am Your property. Turn me over and over again.

Destroy me and do Your work upon me. I want to be reduced to nothing for the love of You.

O Jesus, how kind is Your hand, even in the midst of trials! Let me be crucified, but crucified for You! Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

I know nothing of the Marshal's last encounter with the great enemy, though I hardly think that it would have been a great struggle. He had—he always seemed to have—the peace that passeth all understanding. He had never gone through any spiritual turmoil. At the time of his death the French newspapers recorded that he was reposing peacefully. I can imagine him waiting patiently for the last call. And his parting words, "Let us go," were characteristic. They were often on his lips, for they meant simply: "There is work to do, a duty to perform, let us go to it."

Once he knew that his hour had come—and we may be sure that he *knew*—his one thought would have been—obedience.

Not his to question, appeal, or struggle.

God had revealed His will. He would gladly obey.

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Acknowledgments to: *Marshal Foch*, by Raymond Recouly; *Biography of the late Marshal Foch*, by Sir George Aston; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and *The Times*.



# GLADSTONE



## GLADSTONE

His moral fervour was even greater than his intellectual eloquence, and his convinced courage swept everything before him.

*The Countess of Oxford and Asquith.*

A FRAIL little woman draped in simple mourning stands at the head of an open vault in Westminster Abbey.

She is alone among thousands of royal and distinguished mourners—the great ones of the earth.

During the past few days a quarter of a million of her husband's admirers have filed silently by his coffin in Westminster Hall.

Now the solemn burial service is over and the great dead has gone to his final resting-place among the nation's kings and heroes.

The congregation stirs and is about to move away. But Mrs. Gladstone still remains solitary and pathetic at the head of the open vault. She seems stunned at parting with the remains of her husband, affectionately regarded as England's Grand Old Man.

Those about the tomb would offer her words of sympathy if they dared to intrude upon her grief—if to speak at this moment did not appear to be such an act of sacrilege.

But there is one present who has the ready instinct for doing the appropriate thing in human crises such as this.

The Prince of Wales, soon to become King Edward the Seventh, steps forward, without saying a

word. He takes the tiny black-gloved hand of the aged woman, bends over it, and gives a royal kiss of sympathy.

The congregation melts away.

Few have seen this final touch of human feeling; but those who did will speak of it afterwards as the most touching incident in an unforgettable ceremony.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gladstone, the idealist in action, was more fortunate than many others in the possession of the most devoted of wives.

Disraeli once advised her to take care of him, and no woman needed that advice less than Mrs. Gladstone.

There was a harmony of understanding between the two rarely found in any home. In some ways so dissimilar, they were nevertheless perfectly suited to each other.

Whilst some of Gladstone's friends raised surprised brows at her occasional and irreverent interruptions of a serious conversation, he would be whimsically amused at "her wicked look."

For, though her eyes of sapphire were often glancing with mischief, he, more than anyone, well knew that they would swiftly fill with tenderness for anyone in trouble.

Lucky for Gladstone that he had such a wife. Walking home one day, he stopped and turned back to address a woman of the streets. His friend looked incredulously on. Could this be Gladstone—four times Prime Minister of England—who was actually proposing to take this woman home?

"What," he asked, "would Mrs. Gladstone have to say to such an eccentric proceeding?"

The hawk-like features of the Grand Old Man became blank with amazement.

"Why, it is to Mrs. Gladstone that I am taking her."

The couple worked together for years in perfect harmony for the rescue of fallen women. After his death there were published foul insinuations on his memory—insinuations afterwards expunged in open court.

They originated in a decision which Gladstone made in his young manhood. Believing that most women sin from motives less impure than men, he determined that whatever else he achieved, whether he succeeded or failed, he would, by God's help, not rest until he was able to bring back from the dreary wilderness some of those poor women whose lives man's selfishness had ruined.

Bishop Wilkinson, who was with Gladstone as his chaplain at the last, in recording the incident, pictured him as the young knight in the ancient legend, girding on his armour for a life-long effort.

To Stafford Northcote Gladstone was the "representative of the party, scarcely developed as yet, though secretly forming and strengthening, who will stand by all that is dear and sacred . . . in the struggle which I believe will come between good and evil, order and disorder, the Church and the world. . . ."

And the great Lord Shaftesbury described how, soon afterwards, Parliament was dissolved by the Queen in person, while the Whig Ministers present were seeking to hide their own hoary profligacy under her young virtue.

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In the long struggle of high aims and great abilities in which Gladstone now engaged, at the time when a moral champion was needed in Parliament, Mrs. Gladstone was her husband's constant encouragement.

She understood, with John Bright, that those who abused her husband were those who were not good enough to understand him. For her, life with one so illustrious must of necessity be mostly eclipse; but for him—turmoil, limelight, sunshine and wifely consolation.

She was a good and gay companion. When she had passed eighty she still ran—literally ran—upstairs; and she accompanied him in his daily morning walk to church for worship. She outlived him by two years, and then she joined him again to rest in the old abbey among the kings and the heroes.

Mrs. Gladstone told John Morley that whoever wrote her husband's life must remember that he had two sides—one impetuous, impatient, unrestrainable; the other self-controlled, able to dismiss all but the great central aim, to put aside whatever weakened or disturbed.

She revealed that the secret of his self-mastery in a struggle which had been ceaseless since he was twenty-four was the natural power of his character and his habit of incessant wrestling in prayer.

Gladstone was none too kind to himself when reviewing his youthful conduct. He wished that he could regard it as presenting those features of innocence and beauty which he had often seen elsewhere. The best that he could say was—it was not a vicious childhood.

He did not have a strong natural propensity to the mortal sins, but—truth compelled the admission—he had no recollection of being either a loving child or an earnest or diligent or knowledge-loving child. . . .

God forgive me, the plank between me and all the sins was so very thin . . . the inner life with me has been . . . extraordinarily dubious, vacillating, and above all complex. . . .

He was not a devotional child. He had no early love for the Church of which he became so fond. Yet he remembered a quaint desire, after his father had built the church at Seaforth in 1815, that it would be bequeathed to him, so that *he might go and live in it!*

Napoleon was a man who prayed little and who was so strong that he shed his first tooth in St. Helena. Gladstone remembered that at six or seven years of age he prayed earnestly, but it was for no higher object than “to be spared the loss of a tooth.”

A perfectly understandable prayer nevertheless, for the local dentist was “a kind of savage at his work, with no idea except to smash and crash.”

John Bright helps us to understand the little fellow’s agony of prayer at the prospect of meeting the smash-and-crash dentist :

Think of the difference between a great cart-horse and the highest-bred most sensitive horse you can imagine. And then, under the lashing of a whip, think of the difference between them.

Yet he was endowed with the grit and courage which are so necessary for a successful Parliamentary career. He needed both too at Eton—a hard

enough school for young Englishmen in Gladstone's day. The headmaster was the redoubtable Dr. Keate, who believed that the birch was the divinely-appointed instrument for making bad boys good and good boys better.

Flogging had become second nature to him. He had flogged as many as eighty boys in one day, and only regretted, at the end of his life, that he had not flogged many more.

"I do not mind," he would say, "if my boys lie to me a little. It is a mark of respect"!

True enough. But it was also true that at a reunion of Etonians he would receive a tremendous ovation from the boys he had thrashed. He must have had good qualities which counter-balanced the other, or else the boys he educated had very forgiving natures.

One of young Gladstone's duties was to write the names of certain offenders on the flogging list. Three of the culprits came to him with the story that their friends were coming down from London, and this unfortunate flogging engagement would prevent their meeting.

Gladstone resolved to do his utmost in the interest of common humanity. He omitted three names. Next day when he went into school the master roared out in a voice of thunder :

"Gladstone, put your *own* name on the list."

Thus was early intervention on behalf of the helpless rewarded.

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His general conduct both at Eton and Oxford seems to have been blameless.

"A most painful discourse at St. Mary's, Oxford,



from a Mr. Crowther" so disturbs him that he must immediately write to the preacher "expostulating with him on the character and doctrine of his sermons"; apparently with good effect, for later he enjoys two excellent sermons from the same preacher.

He also finds the discourses of Dr. Chalmers admirable. "He preached, I think, for an hour and forty minutes." Quite a brief sermon when compared with one of Gladstone's five-hour Budget orations, delivered in the verbose days when a Member might talk from dusk to dawn, and yet escape with his life.

Gladstone's Oxford diary further proves how paramount religion had now become in his life.

Cards at night. I like them not, for they excite me and keep me awake. . . . Not that I see folly in playing cards, but it is too often accompanied by a dissolute spirit.

Lady Oxford says that Gladstone was great because he combined deep religious fervour with genius, and this neither Napoleon nor any other historical political hero that she knew, had displayed. He never thought of himself as being outside of the law, an individual superior to mediocrity and despised by it.

On the contrary, he was fundamentally humble. His genius had a kind of greatness which mediocrity recognised at once, and it never disappointed. It was not what Lord Salisbury thought it to be—a question of degree—but a question of kind. Nevertheless, Salisbury called Gladstone a great Christian, and Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, was careful to show that he was not only a political force,

but also a moral force ; that he regarded the Church as the soul of the State, and the strength of the State as dependent upon the moral soundness of the people.

His life was one of austere morality, and few men had less to regret than Gladstone when they turned back upon the past. To the last he kept up his church-going, and once described with exultation how the glory and sound in St. Paul's Cathedral satisfied the supreme test—the power to call forth the sublime from a combination of simple elements.

He endeavoured not to be irritable, but he sometimes failed even in his family circle. His family did not care to disturb him when he was preparing his political rhetoric. He would take a compartment to himself when travelling. In the same train would be his favourite reporter, who accompanied him all over Britain, accurately reporting his orations for a news agency.

Once a member of Gladstone's family required a book. But it was in his father's compartment, and he dared not disturb him. He tried subterfuge, and sent in the favourite reporter. Gladstone came smilingly out of his absorption, said he was most happy to lend the journalist the book, which was then passed on surreptitiously to the Premier's son.

As this incident would show, the Grand Old Man had never an easy time with his temperament. Writing to a son at Oxford, he tendered this piece of Gladstonian wisdom :

In indulging a rebellious temper we flatter ourselves that we are merely indulgent on behalf not of ourselves, but of a duty which we have been interrupted in performing.

But our duties can take care of themselves when God calls us away from them. . . .

To be able to relinquish a duty on command shows a higher grace than to be able to give up a mere pleasure for a duty.

The modern millionaire will extol praise as a motivating power for achieving success in big business. Gladstone laid it down that success must pass us by like a breeze, enjoyed but not arrested.

The fumes of praise are rapidly and fearfully intoxicating. He wished people were more careful and conscientious in paying compliments.

How often do we delude one another . . . into the belief that he has done well what we know he has done ill, either by silence or by so giving him praise on a particular point as to imply approbation of the whole.

Here, of course, Gladstone puts his finger on the moral difficulty—how to be both polite and truthful at the same time, and finds an ingenious method of achieving this doubly desirable end. He suggests that we put our criticism before our praise. We should talk of a poor likeness before we speak of a good painting. And this would be better received than if we put the praise first and the blame second. For it is the more honest and manly way to express an opinion.

With him all duties became a sacrificial offering. Money and time, he said, must be used methodically. He urged his son to dedicate a certain portion of his means to charity and religion; this was more easily begun in youth than in after-life.

The greatest advantage of making a little fund of this kind is that when we are asked to give, the competition is not between self and charity, but between

the different forms of religion and charity, among which we ought to make the most careful choice.

*It is desirable that the fund thus devoted should not be less than one-tenth of our means ; and it tends to bring a blessing on the rest.*

An examination of Gladstone's accounts after his death revealed that all his life he practised this precept; always he gave away one-tenth of his income—a self-imposed income-tax of two shillings in every pound.

He gave his son wise advice on being independent of others.

“Cultivate self-help,” he said, and declared that he knew no precept more embracing and more valuable than this.

Do not seek or like to be dependent upon others for what you can yourself supply, and keep down as much as you can the standard of your own wants; for in this lies the great secret of manliness, true wealth and happiness; as, on the other hand, the multiplication of our wants makes us effeminate and slavish as well as selfish.

Writing thus, he was only passing on to his son a record of his own lifelong practice.

\* \* \* \* \*

In youth Gladstone was handsome; his black hair was often remarked upon and much admired.

He had a commanding personality and an intellect of enormous range, even though he sometimes made mistakes—witness Gordon, the Crimea, the American Civil War.

But he had that imaginative faculty “which jumps from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven”; a knowledge and erudition which seemed to embrace everything, great or small, and an astounding gift of oratory.

Despite his humility, which was sometimes shown in surprising deference to humble persons, there was an unsmiling combativeness visible in the leonine cast of his face. The fiery eyes peered from beneath heavy brows which incessant labour had knitted.

The head was large and wide at the base; it became larger as he grew older—like the head of Mr. Lloyd George—a cause of anxiety to his London hatters; his expansive forehead stood up firmly at either side, indicating idealism linked to cautious foresight; his mouth was substantial, tightened droopingly at the corners, and pointed to a force of will that found equal scope in demolishing a political opponent in Parliament or hewing down a tree at Hawarden.

That wonderful voice of Gladstone's—Parliament will never forget it.

The doyen (at one time) of the Press Gallery in the House of Commons told me that Gladstone's voice was the most pleasing that he had heard from any public speaker. After a long day's work in the Press Gallery, when the reporter's brain had become too tired to absorb the thoughts ascending from the benches below, the silvery voice of Gladstone would rise melodiously, delighting his ear with its cadences, even though his exhausted mind was unable to follow the ideas which were being expressed.

The voice was indeed of singular beauty; always clear and mellifluous, and intensely earnest, sometimes muted on the note of appeal, sometimes reverberating across the very firmament. And so the sharp-tongued Disraeli twitted him with the phrase so often repeated since, of his being inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity.

Yet when there arose a situation in which the moral interests of the people were interwoven with their material needs his power of appeal was amazing. Placable, reasonable and full of manly piety, his eloquence reached its highest point when he handled the moral aspects of political questions; passages of solemn splendour succeeded one another, until his hearers were left with the uncomfortable feeling that to vote against him was to oppose the Divine will which controls the Universe.

Among other things he said that "national injustice is the surest road to national downfall," that "selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race," and that "the disease of an evil conscience is beyond the practice of all the physicians of all the countries in the world."

Doyle said of him that his nurse must have lulled him to sleep with Parliamentary reports and that the first cries from his cradle when he awoke must have been "Hear, hear." But when Henry Taylor first looked at Gladstone he liked him because "he has more of the devil in him than appears."

Yet this was the youth who prepared for his maiden speech in the House of Commons with the bashful trepidation of a schoolboy. As we have seen, throughout his life he was noted for his humility—sometimes it was a proud humility—but he was never so humble as at the moment when he wrote :

The emotions which pass through one . . . in anticipating such an effort as this are painful and humiliating. . . . The utter prostration and depression of spirit . . . the feeling of mere feebleness and incapacity felt in the inmost heart . . .

Yet, unlike Disraeli, he made an instant success,

and afterwards learned that the King had spoken gratefully of his first speech in the Commons.

Nevertheless, he continued to be nervous when he had to open a speech, though when replying his eloquence made him a terrible adversary.

In his moments of sympathy towards human error he also touched the sublime. He would speak of the impossibility of taking to ourselves the functions of the Eternal Judge except when judging ourselves :

The shades of the rainbow are not so nice and the sands of the sea are not such a multitude as are all the subtle shifting blending forms of thought and of circumstance that go to determine the character of us and our acts.

But there is One that seeth plainly and judgeth righteously.

He would mean that we can have no final judgment upon the actions of others, as such judgment must depend upon our knowledge of their intentions.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gladstone put so many reforms on the Statute Book for the benefit of all classes that he could afford to be humble in his admission of error and to disregard Disraeli's cynical counsel :

"Never complain and never explain."

But he showed more diplomatic adroitness than humility when he received from the Queen a telegram—not in cypher—blaming him and his Government for sacrificing Gordon at Khartum.

He replied :

Mr. Gladstone does not presume to estimate the means of judgment possessed by your Majesty, but so far as his information and recollection at the moment

go, he is not altogether able to follow the conclusion which your Majesty has thus been pleased to announce.

There is humility in this reply and there is his accustomed loyalty. But there is a note of irony as well as a reminder that he, after all, has had to bear the responsibility.

Disraeli and Mr. Lloyd George might have handled the situation differently. But Gladstone, than whom the Crown had never a more loyal servant, may well have felt wounded at this stinging telegram despatched without any of the reserves of secrecy.

The polished and graceful Disraeli would never have received such a censorious telegram from his sovereign. Gladstone thought him scheming, unprincipled and diabolically clever; and perhaps he was. We now know that he by no means always treated Gladstone fairly, and that he certainly influenced the Queen against him.

But Disraeli knew how to play the cavalier and to invest his service to the Crown with all the romance of knight-errantry. In conferring upon the Queen the title of Empress of India he finally won her heart. And he never lost it.

Though a Queen, she needed support, and she leant on him more than she could ever lean on Gladstone, for, like her, Disraeli had suffered bereavement, through the loss of his wife. The clever Oriental was swift to apprehend that the Queen was lonely, and determined in her loneliness to brood incessantly over the loss of her husband. And he resolved to be the support she needed. His gallantry and charm and courtly grace were more acceptable than the integrity of heart of the great Liberal statesman.

When Gladstone arrived at the Palace he noted



with regret that grace was no longer said at Royal dinners. He wondered in what reign this unfortunate change took place. Perhaps one day the Queen would change again to the old reverential custom, for Majesty could never put on its most august aspects without religion.

Disraeli was never distressed by thoughts like these. His only concern was to make the Queen enjoy the evening !

After one of their heated debates in the Commons, Gladstone reflected on Disraeli's superlative acting and brilliant oratory, and how his own object of showing the Conservative Party that their Leader was hoodwinking and bewildering them had been achieved.

Afterwards, Disraeli, with great polish and grace, asked Gladstone's pardon for his flying words in debate, and drew ready forgiveness from the man whom he had called "a weird sibyl."

Yet Gladstone, though impressed by Dizzy's serene audacity, did not trust him, but he declared that "at no period of my life, not even during the limited one when we were in sharp political conflict, have I either felt any enmity toward you or believed that you felt any towards me."

He was ever like this to his friends and enemies. Some would come to him and tell him a certain type of story, but they would never draw from him the suspicion of a smile. The piercing flash of his eye killed the humour before it sparkled, and contact with him sent the "humorists" away with an added consciousness of their own peccadilloes and grosser sins as well.

Gladstone was prepared to give them or anybody the advice he gave to his son :

Daily prayer in the mornings and evenings and daily readings of the Holy Scriptures. . . .

As to the holy ordinances of the Gospel there is little need, I am confident, to advise you.

One thing I would say : that it is not difficult, and it is most beneficial, to cultivate the habit of inwardly turning the thoughts to God, though but for a moment, in the course, or during the intervals, of our business ; which continually presents occasions requiring His guidance.

This he did habitually.

Thus he built up and maintained a character for moral and political genius which so impressed his age that it is known as the Gladstonian Era.

His last days at Hawarden were one long prayer ascending upwards through the mists of pain.

Those who saw him at this time felt they were treading the foothills of Paradise.

The family were all kneeling at his bedside when the end came.

A large section of the public made him their hero. Others poured on him their scorn and their hatred. They could never excuse in him what was absent from themselves—so admirably expressed by Spurgeon when he said :

“ We believe in no man’s infallibility, but it is restful to believe in one man’s integrity ! ”

They could not forgive him—since to them goodness was the unforgivable sin.

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# NAPOLEON



## NAPOLEON

This England never did, nor never shall  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,  
But when it first did help to wound itself.

*Shakespeare.*

“*AFTER all, I am only a man.*”

Only a man! But the man who won and then lost—the world.

Napoleon straddled Europe. Judge him by his own standards, and he was the greatest man there ever can be.

He planted one foot in Madrid and another in Moscow, surveyed a continent of pigmies, said that Europe was an old prostitute that must obey his pleasure, and exulted because he had not only conquered the kingdoms of the world, but had gathered to himself all the glory of them.

“My glory” was Napoleon’s religion.

He aspired to be high and lifted up—like Nebuchadnezzar, like Lucifer. Like both, he fell. For Napoleon it was a double downfall.

His enemies knew him by many names—the Ogre, the Anti-Christ, the Spoliator, the Lean Hungry Conqueror, the Beast of Prey, the Callous Calculator, the Fiery Despot, the Man of Irritable and Insatiable Ambition whose combination of intellect and energy has not been equalled by any other human being; the Audacious Usurper whose dazzling achievements have inspired a hostile pen to write of him :

“He has thrown a doubt on all past glory; he has made all future renown impossible.”

\* \* \* \* \*

He was, and is, and perhaps for ever will be the Idol of France. In the country which his ambition bled white his name is sacred. Yet all that he gained for her—and more—she lost, and his wars left her weaker than when they first began, with Belgium and the coveted Rhine frontier shorn away.

And so Napoleon differed from the great conquerors of the world, from Cæsar or from Frederick the Great, whose conquests endured.

Yet no man of action ever shone more conspicuously before an astounded world; on no other human being have so many books been written. There is no end to the literature about him or to the army of miniature Napoleons who take him as their model.

But this dethroned conqueror sweeps his hand over his face and says with melancholy pathos :

“After all, I am only a man.”

He was excusing himself for having lost two or three of the sixty battles he had fought. He asserted that he ought to have won Waterloo. But the English soldiers had usually been victorious over the French. Ah, well, it was fate! He had now learned not to demand of fortune more than she was ready to give :

“It is written,” he said.

Even in captivity he had fascination. It made him still loved and lovable. But there was fear mixed with love.

“The Little Corporal” could always inspire awe, from those days when, as a young lieutenant,

he saw the mob outside the Tuileries and scoffed at his weak monarch, Louis XVI, because he did not silence their noisy attentions with a shower of bullets.

But here in St. Helena his personal appearance is not what it was then, or during those dashing days in Egypt when they dubbed him *Beau Sabreur*—the handsome swordsman.

He is so often bitter. And he is uneasy with that brooding anxiety which has been haunting him during the great hours of darkening fortune from 1812 after Moscow to the fatal battles round Paris, while exiled on Elba, and during the breathless Hundred Days following his escape, with Waterloo intervening before his recapture.

And here in St. Helena that uneasiness will continue until one memorably tempestuous night arrives to uproot the trees outside his dwelling, while the soul of the conqueror is borne outwards on the wings of the storm. Cancer is to do for him what his captors refused to do at his request—relieve him of life by the headsman's axe.

\* \* \* \* \*

During his imprisonment he was cold and haughty, as he was in Paris on his return from his first triumphs in Italy, when the victorious youth refused to allow his admirers to come too near his person. Although he would unbend with his private soldiers, he was always cold and aloof to those who came nearest to him in station, for he knew the secret of controlling men.

His face is of marble, quite colourless, and his eye and brain, on St. Helena, are still amazingly clear, though even his remarkable intellect has

shown that the mind of one man is incapable of indefinitely exercising power, supreme and uncontrolled.

He has many resentments, though he seems to have learned at last that the best way to heal a wound is to forgive it.

Sometimes on St. Helena he exhibited the sneering contempt that he showed in Palestine to Sir Sidney Smith, to whose challenge to a duel he had replied by saying that when the English cared to bring back Marlborough from the grave, he would consent to engage him in personal combat; otherwise one of his grenadiers would give the English commander such satisfaction as he had a right to demand.

For his English gaoler, Sir Hudson Lowe, he had nothing but contempt; he ordered the governor to keep out of his room, or he would be shot.

His bearing remained dignified, even regal, though his behaviour was often petty. Perhaps that was purposely so, as he wished to irritate his conquerors. His brow was thoughtful, the eye penetrating and wise, the mouth firm but not unkindly, the jaw exquisitely rounded and very powerful, the temples were strikingly wide and the forehead lofty; and—for why should we not say so of Napoleon?—suggestive of spirituality and idealism in a high degree; the head as a whole of Olympian massiveness.

Napoleon was definitely on the side of morality—with two important qualifications.

He was for private virtue, and public virtue, too, provided that the exigencies of statecraft did not demand otherwise. He was for the sanctity of the



home and for high ideals for everybody at all times save himself, the sovereign of sovereigns.

And his excuse was a simple one :

I am not like other men.

The laws of morality and decorum cannot be intended to apply to me.

But he was a child of the Revolution that abjured religion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Napoleon loved his wife Josephine, and his second wife Marie Louise of Austria.

But since the laws of "morality and decorum" could not apply to him, he admitted to having been the lover of seven mistresses; and perhaps he had more.

This record, if it is to be believed, compares rather favourably with that of many other potentates and libertines in high places; and morally he was not out of tune with his age.

Like her lord, Josephine was a child of the people; but she rose magnificently to her rôle of Empress. Yet, though she lent adornment to his Court, there was sorrow at the Tuileries. For Napoleon had no heir.

But he had a Chief of Police named Fouché, who had cunning and incredible duplicity. Treason was this man's nature. Later he was to send Napoleon's plans for the battle of Waterloo to the Bourbon King, to prove his disloyalty to the one and loyalty to the other. But he was astute enough to see they did not arrive until they were too late to be useful.

Before that consummation of Napoleon's career

Fouché had much other important work to do. But he was swift to discern what was in Napoleon's mind, and even, when it suited his convenience, to anticipate his master's wishes. One evening he acted. He led Josephine quietly to a corner of her saloon, and after some polite commonplaces, bluntly asked her if she was prepared to make the great sacrifice.

The Empress ordered from her presence the man who had dared to suggest that she should abandon her lord. Her Imperial dignity outraged, she flew to Napoleon and was reassured; the cunning Chief of Police had received no warrant from his master to make this astounding request.

But when Josephine demanded his summary dismissal, Napoleon refused inflexibly. And in due time he confirmed the fears that Fouché had aroused.

One evening the ladies-in-waiting were startled to see the Emperor passing through their room carrying the Empress in his arms. Her body seemed lifeless. Presently she came out of her long swoon, pale and dazed. The autocrat had refused to dismiss his Chief of Police, but he had dismissed his Empress. For though he was only a man, he was also not like other men. The ordinary laws of morality and fidelity could not be expected to apply to him.

When he read the history of the kings of England, he was shocked at their behaviour.

These English are a ferocious people ! (he exclaimed). What crimes there are in their history ! To think of Henry the Eighth marrying Lady Seymour the day after he beheaded Anne Boleyn. Nero never committed such crimes !

We should never have done such a thing in France. He was certainly much gentler with Josephine

than was Henry with the wives who bore him no son. And when he fell and retired to Elba, of all those who shed compassionate tears over his fate, none wept so bitterly as the rejected Josephine.

She refused to be comforted even though the Czar of all the Russias, who was in Paris with the conquering armies of the Allies, called at Malmaison to extend his royal sympathy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Napoleon was not at ease with women.

He had not the grace or the finesse of the great lover. But he was affectionate and indulgent to his family; sometimes to others.

When he received a letter from his mother offering to come to him in St. Helena, he was visibly moved. For she was old and blind and feared that she might die on the way. Though grateful, he would not allow her to come. He tore up the letter!

His dictum upon correspondence was that in time all letters answer themselves.

Napoleon was victorious in Prussia.

The Prince of Hatzfeld, while enjoying his protection in Berlin, betrayed the French movements to the enemy.

His princess gained access to the Emperor and pleaded confidently that her husband was innocent.

Napoleon listened stolidly. Then he handed her a letter in her husband's handwriting which showed that she was wrong.

She had no answer. She fell on her knees in silence.

"Burn the letter," said Napoleon, "then there will be no proof."

He would forgive an enemy at the request of a royal princess; but, even to save Josephine from a

broken heart, he would not surrender his hopes of a son.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet he had his ideals.

He read the Bible, though not so much to stimulate these ideals, as to see what it had to say upon legitimate monarchy, a matter in which he was naturally interested.

He found only one able man in the Book—Moses, who had led out of captivity what Napoleon decided was a cowardly and cruel nation. One day he would write a life of Moses.

But he said that religion lends sanctity to everything. The forgiveness of sins was a beautiful idea. In his will he forgave the treason of Marmont, Augereau, Talleyrand and La Fayette.

He claimed that he had the right to confess a penitent. For had he not been anointed? He is said to have admitted that the happiest day of his life was the day of his first Communion, which means so much to every Catholic.

The Pope corresponded with him as "My dear son," but the "dear son" quarrelled with his Holy Father, made war on the Papal possessions, captured Rome, and declared that the temporal sovereignty of the Pope was wholly at an end, like that of the dynasties of Naples and Spain, who had received at his hands similar treatment. Excommunicated as punishment, he retorted by keeping the Pope a prisoner at Fontainebleau for more than three years. And though the Pope had protested that there was nothing objectionable in the Holy Office he abolished the Inquisition both in France and Spain.

Nevertheless, this Imperial iconoclast re-established the Catholic religion in France, despite the sneers of his supporters, the irreligious sons of the Terrorists. When Mass was celebrated in the Emperor's presence during the Hundred Days, nearly everyone turned his back on the altar.

When Louis the Eighteenth succeeded to Napoleon's throne he was astonished to discover that the part of the Imperial library which had been most used by Napoleon was filled with theological books. But when the King asked Talleyrand if his predecessor was a believer, that wily statesman would only reply :

"Napoleon understood these subjects."

\* \* \* \* \*

He understood them well enough to know that he could not achieve what he did achieve and be in any true sense religious. God, he said, was usually on the side of the big battalions. Yet most of Napoleon's battles were won with the smaller of the opposing armies.

This, however, he explained by estimating his contribution to a battle as at least one half; and here he was probably right.

He was grateful and bountiful to the good hospitallers of St. Bernard, who befriended him and his army, as they do all other travellers over the Alps (including the writer).

And, when crossing the Mediterranean, luckily escaping the British Fleet, he studied the Life of Cromwell, England's Puritan Protector, with such purpose that *he promptly became a Mahomedan on landing in Egypt.*

He was willing, as he told his soldiers, to make

use of any religion to achieve, not so much victory, as conquest. But as for his army in Egypt, it could not be accused of undue religious scruples, as we shall shortly see.

Their indomitable leader urged them forward. He studied the Koran, and cynically called Mahomedanism the finest of all religions; for Mahomet conquered half the world in ten years, whilst it took Christianity three hundred years to establish itself. And, said he, even then it would not have done so without the Crown of Thorns!

The conquistadores approached the Pyramids. Napoleon entered and repeated his new confession of faith:

There is no God but One God and Mahomet is His Prophet.

The sheiks of Islam, too cunning to be deceived, solemnly answered:

God is merciful.

Thou hast spoken like the most learned of the prophets.

Yet they knew that this audacious imposture was but a part of a great scheme to repeat the exploits of their own warrior-prophet.

"God is merciful," they told their new convert. But Napoleon was soon to forget the words of the Prophet, though he contemplated a pilgrimage to Mecca. For Napoleon the Mahomedan agreed with Napoleon the Catholic Christian, in holding that although a man he was not like other men, to whom God's laws of mercy must necessarily apply.

He captured Cairo and then conquered the whole of lower Egypt; then he reappeared in ancient Joppa in Palestine with a small part of his main

army. Three thousand Turks were slaughtered as he carried the walls of the city by storm.

About twelve hundred—some reports say three thousand—men were taken alive. Assured that God was merciful, the demi-god nevertheless rebuked his subordinate for taking prisoners.

The other generals were summoned. There was a conference which ended in the issue of a sinister order.

Out of the old city the prisoners were marched—out there to the barren sandhills. They trudged silently onwards, dumb driven cattle, fatalists in the Holy Land.

There was no escape for anyone. Meekly they submitted to the massacre which they had foreseen. Each was shot or bayonnetted.

The conquering troops of the French Mahomet erected a new and sacred pyramid in the land of Canaan. For many years afterwards this pyramid of dry bones was visible, bleaching in the desert sun.

*God is merciful.*

Napoleon said truly that he could not have achieved what he did had he been a religious man. Yet Cromwell, whose Life he had read on the way out, had behaved with equal brutality in Ireland; and Cromwell was certainly a religious man, though not in Ireland.

The Joppa massacre was indeed a dark stain upon Napoleon's character; yet with him such conduct was exceptional. He acquired a reputation for kindness to conquered peoples, and even boasted that when he landed in England the populace would rise and acclaim him as their liberator; which proves his ignorance of the character of this nation.

Napoleon was a great civil administrator and his code is the foundation of the French legal system. And he seemed to be tireless. After a strenuous council meeting lasting for ten hours he would urge his weary councillors to attend to the business of state, and so earn the money paid to them by their fellow-countrymen.

While others slept before a battle, Napoleon would lie awake planning victory. He had trained himself to sleep only when he had spare time. The enlargement of France, and more particularly the aggrandisement of Napoleon, were always in his mind. If he had only reigned for forty years, he cried, he would have made France the greatest nation the world had ever seen. To-day both his friends and his enemies believe him.

Benevolence was mixed with his sternness. We have seen that he could forgive an enemy; he was fundamentally just except on such occasions as the massacre at Joppa, or when dealing with a Bourbon king, or a kidnapped duke over whose conduct he had no legal authority.

There were floggings under Nelson, the world's greatest admiral, but not under Napoleon, the world's greatest general. Yet his exactions on a conquered state were heavy, and his victorious troops sometimes behaved with unbridled licence and savagery.

The conqueror stripped the galleries of Berlin and Potsdam of their best statues and pictures, robbed the monument of Frederick the Great of his sword and orders, and returned again to Paris in triumph.

One of those pitiable spectacles, the rejoicing of



one city over the ruin of another, which so delighted our forefathers, a sin which, in this particular instance, laid those foundations of hatred between France and Germany which seem destined to endure for ever.

Napoleon says that a man must make a great noise if he wishes to thunder down the ages.

He did not set Paris alight, as did Nero to Rome, but he made a great noise, and he narrowly escaped being roasted alive in Moscow. Accustomed to being in the thick of battle, to hearing the cries of the wounded, to seeing men butchered all around him, and to do his share of it in emergency, and never to show any fear at anything that he saw, unless one of his dearest friends was dying, he was utterly callous to human life.

"My glory" was justification enough, even though it meant laying Europe waste.

Yet he claimed that he never declared war. The Chinese make the same claim; but clever statecraft knows how to frame its policies so that war becomes inescapable without a formal declaration by the aggressor. Foch, his great admirer, condemned his escape from Elba, for it made the Hundred Days and Waterloo inevitable.

Napoleon admired Cromwell because of his ruthlessness; doubting his piety, he believed him to be a master of that dissimulation, or pretence, which leads to war.

Before his *débâcle* in Russia, Napoleon had an intimate conversation with the Czar, who was to be allowed a free hand in Northern Europe, while Buonaparte arrogated to himself full liberty to act as he chose in the south-east peninsula.

Then that part of his religion which he claimed to have learned from Cromwell, the art of dissimulation, was given fullest expression. First he represented to Spain the wisdom of dividing Portugal. Then he poured his troops into Spain, ostensibly to assist in this project, but actually to usurp control over the whole Peninsula, although Spain was then in alliance with him.

By treacherous artifices his troops seized the roads to Madrid, and took the capital. Napoleon curtly informed the reigning family that the Bourbon dynasty was ended. The choice lay between abdication and death.

*Napoleon has turned Puritan !*

\* \* \* \* \*

Though he believed in goodness he continually schemed for worldly greatness. War was his life.

He believed that the peacemakers were only blessed after the victory was won.

His friendly relations with Russia were ruptured. Fouché warned him of the perils of war among the snows. But he was now beyond advice.

Imperiously contemptuous, he said that his French grandees were getting too rich, and were fearful of what might happen at his death. Aspiring to universal dominion he asked :

Is it my fault that the height of power to which I have attained compels me to ascend to the dictatorship of the world ? . . .

The picture exists as yet only in outline.

There must be one code, one coinage, one court of appeal for all.

The states of Europe must be melted into one nation, and Paris must be its capital.

And so to-day, when cards are played, the man who thinks he will win all the tricks goes Nap.

Napoleon had an uncle, a Cardinal.

He too remonstrated with the Emperor against his rashness. This projected new war, following on the ill-treatment of the Pope, might bring down upon him the vengeance of Heaven, the fury of the elements, as well as the wrath of the Tartars.

Napoleon conducted his uncle to the window, opened it, and pointed upwards.

"Do you see that star?"

"No, sir," says the Cardinal.

The Emperor's cold grey eye rests upon him.

"But I see it."

The Cardinal is dismissed.

The sun has risen in splendour on many a morning of Napoleon's bloody battles, and "the suns of Napoleon" have become a byword.

*His religion is now—a Star!*

\* \* \* \*

Before entering Russia, Napoleon is greeted by the Czar's Ambassador, and a second time he receives warning. He is heedless.

The Ambassador says that man proposes, but God disposes.

"I propose and I dispose," says the demi-god, facing his Fate.

His Grand Imperial Army prepares to cross the Niemen, Napoleon riding in front to reconnoitre. His horse stumbles and the Emperor falls. His followers regard it as a bad omen. A Roman general would have turned back. It may have been a third warning.

A single Cossack gallops up and alone challenges the Grand Army.

"Why have you come?"

"To beat you and to take Wilna," he is told.

The Cossack gallops away. The Grand Army, half a million strong, crosses the silent border and vanishes.

When it returns, the Emperor, having conquered the Continent, can then turn back, with some hope of success, to the great ambition of his life—the conquest of England!

His army has an easy task in Russia. There is no opposition. Yet the atmosphere is sinister. Long marches across devastated areas. They reach Salvation Hill, which travellers know so well.

Through the ranks runs the exultant cry:

"Moscow! Moscow!"

Napoleon reins in his horse to regard with a vulture's eye the Gothic steeples and Oriental domes of Mother Moscow.

"Behold at last the celebrated city!"

A pause.

"It was time!"

*Says Napoleon. On the Hill of Salvation.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The magic of his own name is responsible for saving alive even that handful of the half million of men who return eventually from Russia. The homeward passage across the Beresina is one of the most harrowing stories of history.

Eight thousand men, crowds of sick, wounded and women, with their horses and wagons struggle to gain the narrow bridge over the half-frozen river.

Suddenly they espy the avenging Russians behind them.

As the cannon open fire on the trapped multitude an appalling scream rises above the cheers of Cossacks and the roar of artillery.

When the spring comes thirty-six thousand dead bodies are taken from the river's bed.

There are to be no more glorious morning suns for the armies of Napoleon. His glowing suns and his stars have alike vanished from the sky—for ever.

\* \* \* \* \*

The avenging armies of the allies envelop Paris. Napoleon, the great general to the last, dashes from one battle-front to another. News comes that his capital has surrendered. He too surrenders.

Again he takes the road—this time for Elba. Even here he sends his few soldiers to annex a small neighbouring islet, for he must always be the acquisitive conqueror, extending his little kingdom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now that he is safe in St. Helena, his companions in exile and he have plenty of time for discussion.

They asked him once what was the greatest moment of his life. He invited them to guess. One suggested that it was the day he was nominated as First Consul; another the birth of his son, the King of Rome.

Once he had said that he was "happiest" after those early victories in Italy, when at only twenty-five he returned to receive the cheers of the capital. Then the world was his; he felt himself being carried through the air above the heads of everybody.

But now there was that return from Elba! He recalled the march from Cannes, with no army at the start, but one which grew as he progressed, for although he was alone, the royal soldiers he met deserted immediately they recognised him, and fell in behind. Yes, that march from Cannes—it was probably the happiest time of his life.

He thought again. No! That day at Dresden in 1812, when the kings of Europe were at his feet, and he was unbeaten.

Napoleon had three great regrets—that he did not die at some tremendous moment of his career, that he retired from Egypt and surrendered his Eastern ambitions, and—Waterloo!

Had a cannon-ball killed him in Moscow (he thought) his greatness would have endured, his French institutions would have survived, and he would have a name as a conqueror of which history could show no parallel.

But why fight his battles over again? In St. Helena he is better engaged meditating on the problems of religion and human destiny. For a moment he regrets that in his disastrous quarrel with the Pope he did not turn Protestant, and crush once for all the power of Rome.

Yet he also said that only a fool would wish to die without a confessor. He made his will and wrote in the first clause:

I die in the Apostolic Roman religion, in the bosom of which I was born more than fifty years ago.

In those far-away days of his early command he would thunder into his soldiers' ears that talisman sentence: "You must not fear death, *mes enfants*."

Defy him, and you drive him into the enemy's ranks." So now he had no fear.

In his will he advised his son not to revenge his father's death, ". . . but propagate in all uncivilised and barbarous countries the benefits of Christianity and civilisation."

But why? Is he now a true Christian?

He says that it is because religious ideas have more influence than philosophers are willing to believe, and render great service to humanity.

But does he now believe in Jesus Christ?

Lord Rosebery thought that Napoleon was still at heart a Mahommedan, and continued so to the end. The two great conquerors had much in common.

Once Napoleon had burst out defiantly—"Christ had no existence!" That He was not God manifest in man. "He was a Man who was put to death like any other fanatic who claimed to be a prophet or a Messiah!"

Abolishing dynasties, winning wars, capturing the Pope, and straddling Europe, is weak fare on which to nourish faith in the Man whose Kingdom was not of this world.

Yet once there came an evening in St. Helena when he took a different stand.

"I know men well," he exclaimed, "and I tell you that Jesus Christ was *not* a man!"

The Corsican who found the crown of France in the gutter and picked it up on his sword's point, who boasted of his suns and his stars, who played in turn with Mahommedanism, Puritanism, and Catholicism, seemed at last to have reached a point of absolute and final religious conviction; though

he still could not accept a church that he wrongly thought would damn Plato and Socrates and allowed punishment to be eternal.

"Why should it be eternal?" he demanded.

Nevertheless, he now knew that Jesus of Nazareth was *not* a man, because He was *more* than a man.

There was animated conversation at St. Helena that evening.

Napoleon suddenly broke into it with a tremendous panegyric of Jesus Christ. He contrasted Mahomet and Confucius unfavourably with Him, for they were merely legislators, possessing nothing which revealed the Deity, though they had many things which likened them to Napoleon.

But with Christ it was different.

Everything about Him astonishes me; His spirit surprises me and His will confounds me. Between Him and everything of this world there is no possible comparison. He is a Being apart. The nearer I approach Him and the more clearly I examine Him the more everything seems above me; everything continues great with the greatness that crushes me.

His religion is a secret belonging to Himself alone and proceeds from an intelligence which assuredly is not the intelligence of man. There is in Him a profound originality which creates a series of sayings and maxims hitherto unknown.

Christ expects everything from His death.

Is that the invention of man? On the contrary, it is a strange course of procedure, a superhuman confidence, an inexplicable reality. In every other existence but that of Christ what imperfections, what changes! I defy you to cite any existence other than that of Christ exempt from the least vacillation, free from all such blemishes and changes. From the first



day to the last He is the same, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely severe and infinitely gentle.

How the horizon of His empire extends and prolongs itself into infinitude! Christ reigns beyond life and death. The past and the future are alike to Him; the Kingdom of the truth has, and in effect can have, no other limit than the false. Jesus has taken possession of the human race. He has made of it a single nationality—the nationality of upright men whom he calls to a perfect life.

The existence of Christ from beginning to end is a tissue entirely mysterious, I admit, but that mystery melts difficulties which are in all existences. Reject it, the world is an enigma; accept it, and we have an admirable solution of the history of man.

Christ speaks, and henceforth generations belong to Him by bonds more close, more intimate than those of blood, by a union more sacred, more imperious than any other union beside. He kindles the flame of a love which kills out the love of self and prevails over every other love.

Without contradiction the greatest miracle of Christ is the reign of love. All who believe in Him sincerely feel this love, wonderful, supernatural, supreme. It is a phenomenon inexplicable, impossible to reason, and the power of man, a sacred fire given to the earth by this new Prometheus of which time, the great destroyer, can neither exhaust the force nor terminate the duration.

That is what I wonder at most of all, for I often think about it; and it is that which absolutely proves to me the Divinity of Christ.

“Here,” says Dr. Mair, who has carefully studied the authenticity of this declaration attributed to Napoleon, “the Emperor’s voice assumed a peculiar accent of ironical melancholy and of profound sadness,” as he went on :

Yes, our existence has shone with all the splendour of crown and sovereignty; and yours, Montholon and Bertrand, have reflected that splendour as the dome of the Invalides gilded by us reflects the rays of the sun.

But reverses have come; the gold is effaced little by little. The rain of misfortunes and the outrages with which we are deluged every day carry away the last particles; we are only lead, gentlemen, and soon we shall be but dust.

Such is the destiny of great men; such is the near destiny of the great Napoleon. What an abyss between my profound misery and the eternal reign of Christ—proclaimed, worshipped, beloved, adored, throughout the whole universe!

Then he asks solemnly :

*Is that to die ? Is it not rather to live ?*

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# DISRAELI



## DISRAELI

A conviction that what is called fashionable life was a compound of frivolity, of fraud and of vice.

*Disraeli ("Tancred").*

\* \* \* \* \*

The feeling of satiety, almost inseparable from large possessions, is a surer cause of misery than ungratified desires.

*Disraeli ("Lothair").*

CARLYLE called him a fantastic ape !

The description was not unreasonably malicious.

In his youth Disraeli's attire was a riot of extravagant effect.

He delivered his maiden speech in the House of Commons in a black tie (no collar), a bottle-green frock-coat and a large fancy waistcoat.

His mouth was alive with a kind of working and impatient nervousness. It would curl with Mephistophelian scorn as he poured forth a cataract of stinging words.

His hair was a thick mass of jet-black ringlets parted over the right temple. A face handsome, but romantically pale, and an eye "as black as Erebus" with the "most mocking lying-in-wait expression conceivable."

He was indeed lying-in-wait for a great position, and there seemed then no man in England less likely than he to get it. Not long before, he had been introduced to Lord Melbourne, and Melbourne said :

"I'm glad to meet you, Mr. Disraeli. I hear that you are a very clever young man. What is your ambition?"

"To be Prime Minister of England, my Lord," had been Disraeli's reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Disraeli's nature was a strange mixture of dreaminess and practicality. At twenty-one he was a best-seller, although the word itself had not then arrived from America.

His political novels contained many cynical sayings which his enemies applied to himself, not least the words:

"For my success in life, it may be principally ascribed to the observance of a simple rule—I never trust God or man."

There was that other phrase from *Vivian Grey*: "A smile for a friend and a sneer for the world is the way to govern mankind."

And again this: "Am I, then, an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds . . . as he was of human bodies . . . a spiritual libertine?"

But there were other epigrams in his books which might have been quoted by those who sought a true estimate of Disraeli's inner self.

For he made Cardinal Grandison lay it down that "religion should be the rule of life, not a casual incident of it"; that "religion is civilisation at the highest, it is a reclamation of man from savageness by the Almighty"; "Christianity teaches us to love our neighbour as ourself—modern society acknowledges no neighbour;" "Society, indeed, is all passion and no heart;" "The soul requires a sanctuary;" "All things that are good and beauti-

ful make us more religious. They tend to the development of the religious principle in us which is our divine nature."

He told a great meeting at Manchester that he wished the clergy would remember that in our Father's house there are many mansions.

Addressing the Scots in Glasgow he said that the spiritual nature of man is stronger than codes or constitutions, and that no Government can endure which does not recognise this for its foundation, and no legislation last which does not flow from this fountain.

As time is divided into day and night, so religion rests upon the providence of God and the responsibility of man. One is manifest, the other mysterious; but both are divine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet few could see in Disraeli the humble peace-loving disciple of Christ.

Throughout his political career he used the flying word and the flashing phrase with a courage and skill that seemed almost diabolical. The hardest hitter in Parliament, and by far the most able man of his party, he dealt in merciless sarcasm and violent invective.

He was the Red Indian of debate.

Asked at one of his meetings where he stood, he insolently replied that he stood upon his head.

He knew as well as any seasoned politician that political meetings did not ask for erudite argument, but amusement—bitter vehemence and broad sarcasm. Yet his first efforts at the polls were failures. So was his maiden speech in Parliament.

See him sitting disconsolate and with folded arms looking gloomily at the floor as he reflects upon that lamentable effort. Shouts of angry hostility are

directed at him as he struggles through that first speech. But he maintains his temper wonderfully, and sets an example to many a peppery Tory politician who is to follow him.

At last his passionless nature is aroused. He looks his tormentors indignantly in the face, raises his hands, opens his mouth as wide as its dimensions will allow and in terrific tones pronounces :

I am not at all surprised . . . at the reception which I have received. . . .

I have begun several things many times—and I have often succeeded at last.

And, Sir, though I sit down now, *the time will come when you will hear me !*

The Hebrew dandy had given proof of his mettle.

In his youth he was a fighter with his fists. He was now to use “a devil of a tongue” in the teeth of the bitterest prejudice.

Long afterwards, when he lay dead at Hughenden, Gladstone eulogised his late enemy in words warily chosen, but emphasising his “great Parliamentary courage . . . a quality in which I, who have associated with scores of ministers, have, I think, never known but two whom I could pronounce his equal.”

Had Disraeli been able to see a film of his first attempt to dominate Parliament he would have excused the excessive hilarity of the Opposition. How else could they have received that highly-ornate speech delivered with fantastic gesticulations by a man of this singular comedian type, the Dick Swiveller of Parliament, with his ringlets, his outrageous attire, and that lisping voice which would burst into a sudden frenzy of lashing words ?



In a letter to his sister, Disraeli told her that his Parliamentary début had failed, not because of any breaking-down on his part, but because of the physical power of his adversaries.

But Peel, whom he was soon to depose, denied that the speech was a failure, and was confident that Disraeli must make his way. He was advised to get rid of his genius for a session, and without showing himself cowed, to speak more briefly, to be sure of his facts, and above all *to be dull*.

He did as he was told, and was loudly applauded the next time he spoke. The cabal that had tried to ruin him had merely encouraged him to great success.

And what success followed !

His first post was the second most important in the Government—Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons.

His next step upwards achieved his life's purpose—he was now the political chief of “the proudest aristocracy” which had previously despised him, controller of the fleets and armies of the British Empire, and Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland.

He had truly said :

I have begun several things many times and I have often succeeded at last.

The two great rivals, Disraeli and Gladstone, in their early days in the House were sailing under the same colours; an adroit move made by the Oriental might have kept Gladstone safely under his wing, had he not been too astute a politician to be overshadowed.

Of the two, Gladstone had probably the wider outlook, and Disraeli the more penetrating vision. Gladstone saw the entire world, though somewhat hazily; Disraeli rarely troubled to look further than England and the Empire, but what he saw he at least saw clearly.

A certain type of patriot will always award the crown to Disraeli for his services to the Empire, but the more spiritually-minded will place Gladstone on a still higher pedestal, because he overleapt the bounds of nation to serve his fellow-man.

\* \* \* \* \*

Both Disraeli and Gladstone—bitter though their enmity was—believed in the Church.

But by it they meant quite different things.

To Gladstone it was “the body of Christ,” “the blessed company of all faithful people.”

For Disraeli it was the national Church hallowed by its time-honoured associations and ceremonial; the venerable institution which united Crown and people and at the head of which stood the Sovereign. And he valued it none the less because its tradition was a Conservative one.

“There are,” he said, “a few great things left in England, and the Church is one of them.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Disraeli may have remembered Carlyle’s scornful remark about his personal appearance when, having achieved his life’s ambition, he appeared unexpectedly at the Diocesan Conference at Oxford as the champion of orthodoxy in the days of Darwin and the onslaughts of scientists upon the Bible.

Everyone then seemed stunned and bewildered by the latest attack upon the Faith. Nobody

expected that Disraeli, member of the Chosen Race, would feel himself impelled to step forward as the champion of the Old and New Testaments, and to deal a double blow at the egotism of the evolutionists and the unbelief of professing Christians.

But, taking them all by surprise, Disraeli—Carlyle's fantastic ape—faced the Diocesan dignitaries and mockingly asked :

Is man an ape or an angel? I, my Lord, I am on the side of the angels.

The Conference were amused. Disraeli, Carlyle's fantastic ape, was on the side of the angels.

Their merriment rippled forth from the Sheltonian Theatre and echoed in London. Great political organs in Fleet Street broadcast the speech. Disraeli's quip was repeated from table to table, theatre to music-hall, church pulpit to chapel rostrum and tin mission.

At the critical hour for the Church the Hebrew statesman seems to have done more for the defence of established Christianity with one witty sentence about apes and angels than any of his Anglo-Saxon contemporaries. And Froude in his *Life of Beaconsfield* said of this phrase :

It lived and became historical, though the decorous protests of professional divines have been forgotten with the breath that uttered them.

The note of scorn with which it rings has preserved it better than any affectation of pious horror.

That day at Oxford Disraeli was verily a sardonic Daniel come to judgment.

He warned his hearers that it was not our ships or our famous regiments, but the English character which really maintained our Empire. He asked

the sceptics in the churches what would become of the character of the English people if they were to be guided by a Church without any distinctive creed?

The discoveries of science were not, they were told, consistent with the teachings of the Church. "What is the question now placed before society with a glib assurance the most astounding? 'Is man an ape or an angel?' . . ."

Between those two contending interpretations of the nature of man and their consequence society would have to decide, for this rivalry between the ape and the angel in man was at the bottom of all human affairs.

With indignation and abhorrence he repudiated the view that man was an ape, for man was made in the image of his Maker.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nevertheless, to many Disraeli was but a soldier of fortune, a charlatan, a Hebrew conjuror, a seeker after notoriety, a sardonic flatterer using all the arts of the Oriental temperament to beguile the Queen and her subjects.

"You have heard me called a flatterer. And it is true," he admitted. "Everyone likes flattery, and when you come to Royalty you should lay it on with a trowel."

When talking to the Queen he observed the simple rule: "I never deny; I never contradict; I sometimes forget."

She gave him her confidence and her respect, smiling on him as she never smiled on Gladstone. He rewarded her by making her Empress of India, and he gave to her and the country of his adoption

the key to India, the Suez Canal. For these services she offered him the highest honour he chose to ask—she would make him a marquis ! or a duke !

But he was content with his earldom.

All that was left to her was to send him presents, and in the spring-time weekly gifts of his favourite flower, the primrose, came regularly from the Royal household. His letters of acceptance "to my beloved Sovereign" were models of grace and gratitude.

To her he would write :

*Most Secret.*

The information comes to Lord Beaconsfield under such a seal of confidence that Lord Beaconsfield cannot tell it even to his colleagues, but his conscience and his heart alike assure him that he can have no secrets from his beloved Sovereign.

And when sending her confidential reports from Berlin he constantly introduced the same spirit of loyal chivalry.

Bismarck had sought to impress on him never to trust princes or courtiers, and told him that his illness had been brought on by the treatment which he had received from his imperial master. Disraeli told the Queen that Bismarck continued in this vein until "I was at last obliged to tell him that instead of encountering duplicity, which he said was universal among sovereigns, I served one who was the soul of candour and justice, and whom all her ministers loved."

The man who at Oxford was on the side of the angels delighted to effect his purposes in the Near East by a sort of diplomatic confidence trick.

The Sultan of Turkey was informed in the

strictest confidence of England's policy, and after being thus sworn to secrecy, immediately passed on the secret to the Czar and Bismarck, as Disraeli had intended he should do.

Later he was to use the same trick in Berlin to keep the Russians out of Constantinople. He told the Italian Ambassador, again in confidence, and as an old friend, that unless Russia did what he wished he proposed to break up the Conference and return to England. The Italian Ambassador promptly revealed this information, again as Disraeli had intended, and the wily Hebrew returned to England triumphant, bringing back—"Peace with *Honour*."

Yet there was neither peace nor honour for Disraeli in England, at least so long as Gladstone could write scathing pamphlets or thunder his wrath at political meetings.

Gladstone virulently attacked Disraeli over the Bulgarian atrocities, and even the Queen urged her minister to speak plainly in condemnation of them. But Disraeli refused to be stampeded by his opponent. Misled by the British representative at Sofia, he characterised the Turkish atrocities as coffee-house chatter.

Gladstone's language became increasingly provocative. He said that not only were Disraeli's doctrines false, but that the man was more false than his doctrines, that "he is, in fact, the worst and the most immoral minister since Castlereagh."

He insinuated that Disraeli's innate hatred of Christians prevented him from protesting against the atrocities of the Turks. "The Jews of the East," he explained, "bitterly hate the Christians, who have not always used them well."

There had indeed been frightful massacres.

Women had been burned alive. Some were left still living but mutilated, their hands, ears and feet slashed away.

Gladstone blazed forth to the world that "these fell Satanic orgies" were enough to move the indignation of European gaolbirds and South Sea cannibals. He alleged that Disraeli, to maintain his influence, had demoralised public opinion, bargained with diseased appetites, and stimulated passions, prejudices and selfish desires.

Now, it cannot be denied that Disraeli had a friendly feeling toward the Turk. In his youth he had visited the Balkans, and one night had drank himself tipsy with a Turkish Bey.

My Turkish prejudices (he wrote) are very much confirmed by residence in Turkey. The life of the people greatly accords to my taste.

To repose on voluptuous divans and smoke superb pipes, daily to indulge in the luxury of a bath which requires half a dozen attendants for its perfection . . . is a more sensible life than the bustle of clubs, the boring drawing-rooms, and the coarse vulgarity of our political controversies.

And Gladstone's onslaughts left him unmoved.

He told Lord Derby that "Gladstone has had the impudence to send me his pamphlet, though he accuses me of several crimes. The document is passionate and not strong; vindictive and ill-written—that of course. . . . Of all the Bulgarian horrors perhaps (Gladstone's pamphlet is) the greatest."

Nevertheless it would be quite wrong to conclude that Disraeli was unmoved by the barbarity

of the Turks. After all, Gladstone was in opposition, and had no responsibility. But if, on the other hand, his opponent carried the country and tried to avenge these atrocities by expelling the Turks from Europe, Disraeli saw that the immediate result would be a conflagration in the Near East and further bloodshed.

So, though he should have spoken much more strongly, he professed himself contented to "let posterity do justice to that maniac Gladstone—extraordinary mixture of envy, vindictiveness, hypocrisy and superstition; and with one commanding characteristic, whether Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition, whether preaching, praying, speechifying or scribbling—*never a gentleman!*"

Though this suggests the Cardinal's curse against the jackdaw, he went further and said in a letter to Lady Bradford:

What you say about Gladstone is most just. What restlessness! What vanity! And what unhappiness must be his! Easy to say he is mad. It looks like it.

My theory about him is unchanged: a ceaseless Tartuffe (hypocrite) from the beginning. That sort of man does not get mad at seventy. . . .

His vanity is to be a literary character. . . . Gladstone can't write. Nothing can be more unmusical, more involved, or more uncouth than all his scribblement; he has not produced a page which you can put on your library shelves.

This last opinion he later modified by saying with much greater truth:

"Mr. Gladstone is an excellent writer but nothing that he writes is literature."

When Gladstone announced that his policy had



been "week by week, month by month, to counter-work what I believe to be the policy of Lord Beaconsfield," Disraeli exclaims :

What an exposure !

The mask has fallen, and instead of a pious Christian, we find a vindictive fiend, who confesses he has for a year and a half been dodging and manœuvring against an individual—because he was a successful rival.

Thus—two prominent members of the same Church of England.

Yet it is recorded that upon one occasion, as Gladstone made a violent onslaught upon Disraeli in the House of Commons, Disraeli heard him out, and then left the Chamber. In the vestibule he saw Mrs. Gladstone making her way to the gallery. Rushing up to her, he seized her hand :

"Take care of him. Take care of him," he murmured.

Against this may be set another meeting. At a reception he met Miss Gladstone, and she asked him if he could tell her the name of a certain diplomat who was present. Disraeli did so, and added whimsically :

"He is the most dangerous man in Europe, with the exception, as your father would say, of myself, or as I should prefer to put it, of your father."

\* \* \* \* \*

Who was right and who was wrong ? Was Gladstone always the saint and Disraeli only the gibing sceptic ?

Or was Disraeli the virtuous statesman and Gladstone the envious hypocrite ?

Which was the political Barnum and which the Bunyan of Victorian politics ?

The late Mr. T. P. O'Connor wrote a book about Disraeli in which he accused him of living his whole life in the spirit of one of his characters, that intellectual Don Juan and spiritual libertine who respected nothing.

According to "T. P.," the whole character was complete in its selfishness and uniform in its dishonesty, without a single generous emotion or one self-respecting act, without one moment of sincere conviction except that of his own almighty perfection. There was throughout the same selfishness, patient, calm, unabating, unrelenting.

Such a man, said he, was accepted by the millions of this mighty Empire as chief ruler. What should posterity most wonder at—the audacity of the impostor or the blindness of the dupe?

The truth is surely that no very ambitious man can be indifferent to self, and for obvious reasons. Disraeli, though ambitious, was not necessarily more selfish than any other successful politician, and he was far more loyal to his subordinates than most political leaders have been. The Oriental in him made him, however, love to dramatise his successes, and he enjoyed to the full the outward show of power. Yet at the bottom of his mind lay the words of the Preacher :

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

He was a good landlord to his tenants.

He said of one of his retainers : "For the first five years he was with me I found him a most excellent servant ; for the next five years he was a faithful and interesting friend ; and for the last five years he has been a most indulgent master."

For although Disraeli had a sharp tongue, he had an exceedingly kind heart. An enemy described him as the descendant of the impenitent thief who died upon the cross. Yet he helped both friends and enemies, and he bore no grudges. He knew that Carlyle despised him; but it was he only who offered a decoration and a pension to the great writer in his impecunious old age, thus heaping coals of fire upon him, as Carlyle himself admitted.

Those who were closely associated with Disraeli in political life bore witness to his unfailing sympathy, while to all who attended him in his last illness he showed himself uniformly patient and considerate.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of his chief peculiarities was his liking for elderly women.

He was fifteen years younger than his wife. Yet the marriage was happy, although Disraeli seems to have married more for money than for love.

Most of the heroes of his novels had made their first success by wealthy marriages.

"As for love," he cynically said, "all my friends who married for love or beauty either beat their wives or live apart from 'hem." A saying as sage and cynical as those others :

"Success usually comes to the man with the best information." "Youth is a blunder; manhood is a struggle; old age a regret." "As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench the ministers reminded me of . . . a range of exhausted volcanoes."

There must have been affection in the Disraeli household. As witness the carriage-door incident. Driving to the Commons one evening with Disraeli,

his wife caught her finger in the door, but refused to speak of her pain lest she should upset his preparation for the coming debate.

Though he did some extraordinary things, his name was never coupled with scandal. Disraeli as a young man was warned against smoking by a distinguished colonel who said :

“ Take care . . . I lost the most beautiful woman in the world by smoking. It has prevented more liaisons than the dread of a duel.”

“ You have proved smoking to be a very moral habit,” said young Disraeli.

Yet Disraeli was himself a smoker, and indeed was not always careful of the time and place. He had made a political speech at Bridgwater and having arrived at the station rather early was waiting for the London train. The weather was cold and rainy, the waiting-room was empty and there was a large fire inside. Disraeli went in, closed the door and lit a cigar. But an observant porter quickly followed him. He was on the point of reporting the offender when he recognised the Prime Minister and became humbly apologetic.

Disraeli turned and looked at him.

“ I thought at first,” he remarked, “ that you were an honest man doing your duty. But now I see that you are nothing better than a d—— snob ! ”

Not thus would Gladstone have expressed himself. Strangely enough he was a “ better mixer ” than his rival.

\* \* \* \* \*

Disraeli kept an assignation at the Crystal Palace Fountain—his first meeting with an unknown lady

of his own race—Mrs. Brydges Williams of Torquay, who became his friend and benefactress. At her request she was buried in the same vault at Hughenden with Disraeli and his wife.

He understood men better than Gladstone, but he hated men's dinner-parties and clubs, and was happier in his friendships with women. In later life he drew round him a circle of ladies with whom he maintained a regular correspondence; these he formed into a "fantastic fellowship." Each received a small brooch in the shape of an insect admitting her to the Order of the Bee (B).

The Queen gave permission to Princess Beatrice to accept one of the brooches. Other members of this extraordinary order were Lady Bradford, Lady Chesterfield, Lady Newport, Lady Beauchamp, and the Ladies Maud and Gwendolen Cecil.

\* \* \* \* \*

To the end he remained a mystery.

Was he in earnest? Was he really on the side of the angels, or was he seeking to range the angels on the side of Disraeli?

At times he seemed to be "read and known of all men," and yet he would have loathed to tell the world his inmost thoughts.

One of his characters says :

"Sensible men are all of the same religion."

"And pray what is that?"

"Sensible men never tell."

Though born a Jew, as a youth, at the request of his father, he became a baptized Christian.

Like all Christians, he believed that Christianity

was Judaism completed. To-day he would have borne his witness against anti-religion in Russia as he did in these words against the Republican deity of the French Revolution :

When the turbulence was over, when the waters had subsided, the sacred heights of Sinai and Calvary were again revealed, and amid the wrecks of thrones, extinct nations, and abolished laws, mankind, tried by so many sorrows, purified by so much suffering, and wise with such unprecedented experience, bowed again before the Divine truths that Omnipotence had entrusted to the custody and promulgation of the Chosen people.

When he died he was engaged on a book which might have told us more.

Gladstone was to have been its hero, a man who, "firm in his faith in an age of dissolving creeds, wished to believe that he was the man ordained to vindicate the sublime cause of religious truth."

If Disraeli had only lived to fill in the details of that portrait !

Yet we can turn again to the characters in his published works for more side-lights on his religion.

"My books," he says, "are the history of my life. I don't mean a vulgar photograph of incidents, but the psychological development of my character."

And so we turn back to his books to find again that religion should be the rule of life, not a casual incident of it ; that "what you call forms and ceremonies represent the devotional instincts of my nature" ; that "there is a lighthouse in the world, and its light will never be extinguished, however black the clouds and wild the waves" ; that we

may doubt as much as we like, but belief will come in good season.

So one of his characters is "a Parliamentary Christian until despondency and ceaseless thought and prayer and the Divine will brought me to light and rest."

He sends his heroes on pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and he, describing Jerusalem, dwells reverently on that long winding ascent to a vast cupolaed pile which now covers Calvary, and which is called the "Street of Grief," because "there the most illustrious of human as well as of the Hebrew race, the descendant of King David, and the Divine Son of the most favoured of women, twice sank under the burden of suffering and shame which is now throughout all Christendom the emblem and triumph of honour. . . ."

Then he comments :

Christians may continue to persecute Jews, and Jews may persist in disbelieving Christianity, but who can deny that Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of the Most High God, is the Eternal Glory of the Jewish race?

\* \* \* \* \*

When Disraeli lay dying he spoke several times on spiritual subjects, and showed his appreciation of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ.

"I had rather live," he said. Then, like Washington and Cromwell, he added, "but I am not afraid to die."

And there was one death-bed phrase, most cryptic, over which some have puzzled :

"I have suffered much. Had I been a Nihilist I should have confessed all."

All of what ?

And should we know more or less to his credit  
and to the credit of the exalted world with whom he  
mingled and over whom he towered :

*If Disraeli had only confessed ?*

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NELSON



## NELSON

My soul is full of longing  
For the secret of the sea.  
*Longfellow.*

BECAUSE to them their Commander-in-Chief was a saint, as well as their friend and the national hero, a group of British blue-jackets tore up the Union Jack.

They did this at Nelson's funeral service in St. Paul's Cathedral.

With the reverence and efficiency expected of naval handymen they had lowered the body of the world's greatest admiral into the tomb; then, as though answering a sharp order from the quarter-deck, they all seized the Union Jack and tore it to fragments.

Each took his souvenir of the illustrious dead.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nelson was a parson's son.

He prayed morning and evening and wrote special prayers in his log when about to engage the enemy in battle.

He spent his life staring calmly into the face of death, expecting, and indeed feeling ready at any minute to meet his Maker, whom he worshipped and, according to his lights, conscientiously strove to serve.

Like Sarah Bernhardt, who imitated him, he took his coffin wherever he went. It came to him as a present from one of his loyal captains after the

Battle of the Nile, and was constructed from the mainmast of the *Orient*, the flagship of the defeated French admiral.

Nelson ordered that this strange present be kept upright in his cabin as a reminder that death was ever before his eyes. But his guests and his staff were so disturbed by its presence that he yielded to the appeal of a favourite servant and had it carried below—until it should be needed.

Before embarking for Trafalgar the admiral called at his London upholsterer's to arrange that the coffin's history be engraved on the lid, as it was highly probable that he would need its services on his return!

He seems to have had a presentiment that he was about to engage in his last battle, for he remarked to his officers:

To-morrow I will do that which will give you younger gentlemen something to talk about and something to think about for the rest of your lives.

But I shall not live to know about it myself!

Every time that Nelson caught sight of his coffin it must have given him something to think about.

For the vessel from which it was made was the same burning ship on whose decks the little ten-year-old Casabianca, immortalised in English verse, had stood alone waiting for orders.

The brave child and his father were last seen clinging to the floating mast.

The scene of death and destruction when the *Orient* blew up was probably the most impressive spectacle in the whole of Nelson's life, and one of the most extraordinary in the history of naval warfare.

During this Battle of the Nile, and in all his battles, Nelson felt himself dependent upon God for guidance and safety.

He emerged from it the national hero and saviour, and to the French—the terror of the seas.

He had shown a resolute courage, wisdom and genius in naval tactics that proved him superior to any officer afloat. Napoleon and his conquering army of Egypt had been cut off completely from France.

Nelson was master of the Mediterranean.

At last he had proved in practice his life-long contention that a uniform conduct of honour and integrity seldom fails to bring a man to the goal of fame. This faith had been his consolation during all the years of effort and disappointment—when undergoing censure, or disobeying unwise orders, attacked in the courts at home for doing his duty abroad, or seeing others rewarded for his own outstanding achievements.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nelson was a small man and rather frail.

He was several times wounded; he lost an arm and the sight of an eye. Often he was tortured with pain. Yet there never was a braver man or a greater slave to country and duty. "God and my country" were his passion.

*In him there was something of the mystic; his passion for England and all that was heroic came in a way that suggested he was in touch with a real source of inspiration.*

The mystic may see a vision in a cathedral, or trace a divine signal on the face of a mountain steep,

or hear a voice in the wind or from a burning bush;  
*it is the call to service!*

Nelson's call to service for his country came when he was a boy at sea. Disconsolate, he had decided that it was impossible for him to rise in his profession.

My mind was staggered with a view of the difficulties I had to surmount. . . . I could discover no means of reaching the object of my ambition.

After a long and gloomy reverie, in which I almost wished myself overboard, a sudden glow of patriotism was kindled in me. . . .

"Well, then!" I exclaimed, "I will be a hero, and confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger!"

This was no mere warm ambitious impulse, but an experience, definitely religious. Illumination and power had come to this feeble youth; they were to sustain him continually and to impel him forward to the supreme heights of his profession.

Long afterwards Nelson loved to speak of this experience. It seemed that a radiant orb had been dangled before his spiritual eye, a "light from heaven" to guide him forward to victory and glory.

Mystics call Nelson's state of mind before his experience "the dark night of the soul" which usually comes before a miraculous illumination. It would seem to be an essential preliminary. But presently light flashes, and the child of destiny becomes invulnerable until his work is finished, as Nelson's was finished at Trafalgar.

Indeed, the completeness of Nelson's last victory was so misunderstood that it was long assumed the best way to win a sea-fight was to rush in, as Nelson would do, and attack the enemy on sight. The study

of tactics in the British Navy was therefore practically dropped for almost three-quarters of a century.

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*

In Nelson's serene and kindly glance there was something noble and suggestive of those lightning inspirations which enabled him, amid the thunder of battle, to utilise the slightest opportunity which the enemy gave him to achieve complete victory. But there was more in his tactics than a mad dash at the enemy.

*Nelson in battle was a man inspired.*

Admiral Mahan said of him that "No man was ever better served by the inspiration of the moment; no man ever counted on it less. He thought out his plans carefully in advance, and took special precautions so that his captains clearly understood what they had to do."

To him England's war against Napoleon was a holy war.

History is full of strange contrasts. Could there have been any greater irony than that two such supreme leaders, probably the greatest general of all times, and assuredly the greatest admiral, should have opposed each other in different elements to decide the fate of the modern world?

Both Nelson and Napoleon were ambitious in the extreme; both had the same tactical fighting methods—concentration upon the enemy's weakest and most vulnerable point, and rapidity of decision and movement. Both declared that time was everything; that five minutes made the whole difference between defeat and victory.

Each intensely disliked the other. Each believed that he would have beaten the other in either element.

Napoleon wished that he could be a sailor so that he could have beaten Nelson, and the Admiral's only reason for wishing to be a soldier was his desire to whip the Little Corporal out of his big boots.

Nelson said stoutly :

I detest Europe for being so mean-spirited as to submit to the mandates of this Corsican—I blush for their meanness. If we are true to ourselves, a fig for the great Buonaparte.

He would illustrate the way the English should negotiate with Napoleon. Taking up a poker he would say :

It matters not at all in what way I lay down this poker. But if Buonaparte should say it must be placed in this direction, we must instantly insist upon its being laid differently.

That was the Spirit of England speaking during the Nelson era, the spirit of the man who put his telescope to his blind eye and refused to see or respond to his superior's signal to withdraw.

And so, nailing his colours to the mast, he won the Battle of the Baltic.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet he was always a religious man striving to combine his high sense of duty to his country with his duty to his Creator.

At home it was his custom to attend church. On board the *Victory* divine service was held regularly and respectfully, whenever the weather permitted it.

The Admiral took so keen an interest in the sermons that he was constantly seeking to improve their quality.

If he felt that a sermon had been good and helpful to the men, he told the chaplain so ; if he felt the



clergyman could have done better, he would lead him down to his cabin, draw forth a volume of sermons which he had been studying, and point out such passages as he felt might with advantage have been included.

*The Nelson Touch—in things of the spirit.*

He had the vanity of genius combined with a remarkable humility. When he was at Naples, after the Battle of the Nile, some of his captains decided to have their chief painted by one of the most eminent artists in Italy. But the painter, who had come to breakfast, made no preparation to begin his work. Asked when he would start he answered enigmatically :

“Never !”

They stared, and he continued :

“There is such a mixture of humility and ambition in Lord Nelson’s countenance that I dare not risk the attempt.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Humanity to a beaten enemy after a battle was Nelson’s consistent practice. “When the Danes became my prisoners, I became their protector,” he wrote. “In my opinion, nations, like individuals, are to be won more by acts of kindness than cruelty.”

To rebels he was stern, as in the strange case of the captured rebel General Caraccoli, who made a most dramatic reappearance after his execution. Tried by a Neapolitan court-martial on a British ship, he asserted his innocence, but was found guilty.

Nelson ordered that he be hanged at the yard-arm. The indignity of his end rather than death itself was the General’s greatest concern ; he begged to be shot. Nelson refused.

British blue-jackets lined the rigging and watched

the execution. It is said that Lady Hamilton also looked on. The body was sunk in the bay with three shot attached weighing about 250 pounds.

Some time afterwards, when Nelson was sailing with the Royal family aboard, the King of Naples, looking through his telescope, saw the dead Caracoli, standing upright in the water, and moving towards the ship.

A loyalist suggested that the General's spirit was not at ease, and had come to seek the King's forgiveness for disloyalty in life. It was found, however, that the body had risen and floated, the shot attached to its legs keeping it in an erect position. Nelson ordered it to be taken ashore and buried.

But we must not allow Nelson's conduct at Naples to influence too greatly our judgment of him as a religious man. The circumstances were exceptional, and he must not be too severely blamed for accepting the point of view of the Neapolitan authorities, who regarded Caracoli and his followers as no better than traitors. To him it seemed there was a clear case for severity, and we can only wish that he had investigated the facts with rather more impartiality.

Ordinarily he was gentle, considerate and forgiving.

His warm and generous nature made him hate to inflict punishment, even when it had to be done in the interests of discipline. Those who served under him clamoured to continue with him when he changed his ship.

Some of his crew became Methodists. These, offended by the oaths of their shipmates, desired a separate mess, and Nelson, who was never known

to use a coarse expression, and who, like Washington, refused to lie, instantly consented.

The health and comfort of his sailors, and that all should receive a due reward for their services, were his constant anxiety. When he himself had been overlooked in the honours awards, someone spoke to him of pity.

"Pity!" he rapped out. "Don't pity me. One day I shall have a *Gazette* of my own!"

And he did.

But he had pity for little midshipmites who came aboard. When he saw one of them looking timidly into the rigging, fearful of the coming order to go aloft, he would challenge the lad to a race to the masthead.

When, breathless, they faced each other at the peak, he would laugh at the landlubbers ashore, who were afraid of this kind of life.

*The midshipmite was being taught courage without knowing it.*

His men were proud to be under a hero whose name was feared all over Europe, and they told with zest of such incidents as that which occurred just before Trafalgar.

Nelson, unobserved, had seen a signal officer stamp his foot with vexation after the mail-boat had departed. He asked what was wrong.

The officer hesitated. "Well, if you must know, my Lord, I will tell you. You see the coxswain there. We have not a better man aboard. He was so busy getting off the mails that he forgot to drop his own letter to his wife in the bag. He has just discovered it in his pocket."

"Signal her back," said Nelson. "His letter shall go with the rest. . . ."

Two of his captains were not on speaking terms, and Nelson gave them a short lesson in brotherly love and the team spirit. He ordered the two to meet and, pointing to the French ships, said :—

“Gentlemen, *there* is the enemy. Shake hands and be friends.”

They obeyed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Study Nelson's face and you see a striking resemblance to Wolfe of Quebec and Frederick the Great. Each possessed features inclining to effeminacy, a refinement of the jaw, chin and mouth, yet redeemed from the commonplace by an audaciously-pointed nose.

There is a steady fearlessness in Nelson's glance. Nevertheless, he had a fear-spot—this sailor who as a boy said that he never knew fear.

Drawn swords and flame-spouting guns, the surgeon's knife and the storm-whipped ocean only stimulated his courage. But there came a day when he showed the white feather. He was home in England driving in a four-horsed phaeton, and the pace must have been lively.

The friend who drove had said there was no danger, the horses were completely under control, and he was accustomed to handling them.

“We had not driven far before I observed a peculiar anxiety in Nelson's countenance and presently he said, ‘This is too much for me, you must set me down.’”

The driver protested, but Nelson insisted. The Admiral was no speed-hog. He admitted that the bravest man felt anxiety when entering battle, though he himself dreaded disgrace more than death.

In his features, too, there was great intelligence, a fine sense of morality and justice. He tried to square those qualities with his conduct towards Lady Nelson and Lady Hamilton. And failed as dismally as enemy admirals failed before the magic of the Nelson Touch. Pacing his quarter-deck, on a tossing ship, facing an enemy superior in numbers and equipment, Nelson was invincible; Nelson in love was Nelson vanquished.

For though neither philanderer nor libertine, he was defeated on a moral issue. Napoleon admitted to seven mistresses and probably had many more. Nelson had one. After he had received the applause of half a Continent for his victory at the Nile he still declared that his wedding-day was the happiest day of his life. But he had already fallen in love with Lady Hamilton.

Both Lady Nelson and Lady Hamilton have been portrayed as angels and as their opposites. The simple truth is that Nelson after his marriage became infatuated with a woman of no social position in this country, though of great personal charm, from whom he had neither the wish nor the self-control to break free.

He was great, but not great enough to win the most difficult of all battles. His only child was Lady Hamilton's daughter Horatia.

Lady Hamilton has been "written up" as the divine lady, but her "divinity" was shown in captivating our greatest hero of the sea and stealing him from his wife just at that enviable hour when he had burst into dazzling fame. Both Nelson and his paramour were undoubtedly in love with one another; though both had been in love before with

others, and, in particular, Lady Hamilton, whose career was more picturesque than pure, had had many lovers.

Nelson and Lady Hamilton suffered the penalty of folly; and Lady Nelson suffered too.

While England was sounding his praises, he went to Court and was received by the King and duly snubbed. The King inquired after his health and shook his hand. Then, without waiting for a reply, he turned to an unknown general and engaged him in animated conversation for half-an-hour.

Nelson assumed with chagrin that the two could not have been discussing the General's victories.

The Admiral thought that he could brave public opinion with his mistress, and the Royal snub did not mean that others at the Court were more moral than he; but they were more discreet. The antagonism which he aroused only stimulated his open nature to greater determination.

Excuses can be made both for him and for his mistress, but none that does not apply with equal force to Hollywood romances. His own was marked with other painful occurrences, which, if he had known a little more about a woman's psychology, might have been avoided.

He seems to have been oblivious to the Scriptural and the psychological truth that out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh. As witness this incident!

The family solicitor was breakfasting with Lord and Lady Nelson in London, and a cheerful conversation on indifferent subjects was proceeding when the Admiral spoke of something that had been said or done by "dear Lady Hamilton."

Lady Nelson rose from her chair and exclaimed with much vehemence : “ I am sick of hearing of ‘ dear Lady Hamilton,’ and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me.”

With perfect calmness the Admiral replied :

“ Take care, Fanny, what you say. I love you sincerely, but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her otherwise than with affection or admiration.”

Without uttering a soothing word or gesture, and muttering that her mind was made up, Lady Nelson left the room, and shortly after drove from the house. They did not live together again.

Nelson made ample provision for her during his life and after his death. In later years she continually talked of him, and always attempted to palliate his conduct towards her. She was warm and enthusiastic in her praises of his public achievements, and seems to have bowed in dignified submission to the errors of his domestic life.

In later years she lived in Paris with her son by her first marriage, and one of her sayings to her granddaughter has pathos.

“ When you are older, little Fan, you too may know what it is to have a broken heart.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Nelson’s infatuation destroyed his domestic happiness and tarnished his name. Yet he saved England.

In seeking out the French Fleet and destroying it he showed an unequalled perseverance. He continued to rely upon the guidance and help of the divine Providence.

When roused to undertake one of his conquering

cruises he would say, "I will do my best, and I hope that God Almighty will go with me." When his ship was damaged in the Gulf of Lyons he was gratefully humble and said :

I ought not to call what happened to the *Vanguard* by the cold name of accident. Firmly I believe that it was the Almighty's goodness—to check my consummate vanity.

I believe that it has made me a better officer, as I feel confident that it has made me a better man.

Despite Lady Hamilton, Nelson was a man with an abnormally high moral sense, but with "a blind spot."

His infatuation for "Emma" was unfortunate. But Nelson never seems to have thought that he was acting immorally. I think he reasoned that there are certain things in life which are so strong that even the moral law must bow before them, and that when two people believe that they are essential to each other's happiness, no moral stigma can ultimately be attached to their relations.

Though false, it is not a new doctrine.

On the other hand, we have no Scriptural grounds for supposing that immorality is a vice more displeasing to the Almighty than any other, as respectable people often suppose it to be. Christ did not accuse the Pharisees of immorality, but he said that the publicans and the prostitutes entered the Kingdom before them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Just before Trafalgar an officer surprised Nelson in his cabin as he was writing his last prayer—for England and humanity.



May the great God whom I worship grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet!

For myself . . . I commit my life to Him Who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my country faithfully. To Him I resign myself and the just cause entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen.

In the cabin above his bed hung the portrait of Lady Hamilton. It was taken down while clearing for action, and the men were instructed to take care of his guardian angel.

Coming on deck, Nelson decided to amuse the Fleet with a few signals, and he seems to have annoyed Collingwood, who was preparing to fight a four-decker.

"Why doesn't Nelson stop signalling?" growled Collingwood.

Then—"England Expects Every Man To Do His Duty" fluttered above the *Victory*. Cheers rose all along the line. From Collingwood too.

The fatal shot was fired, and Nelson's spinal column was broken. Down in the cockpit, in great pain, he hears that ten of the enemy's ship have already surrendered.

"I hope none of our ships have struck."

"No fear of that," says Hardy.

Nelson dies in the moment of victory, repeating to himself his vindication:

"Thank God, I have done my duty!"

Just before, as his mind goes back to his beloved

Emma and his daughter Horatia, he utters a pathetic expostulation :

*" Doctor, I have not been a great sinner."*

\* \* \* \* \*

His sailors adored him, and called him Saint Nelson.

Perhaps they were right, for though he sinned, he was at heart—a saint.

## DICKENS



## DICKENS

Every baby born into the world is a finer one than the last.

(*Nicholas Nickleby*).

Train up a fig-tree in the way that it should go and when you are old sit under the shade of it.

(*Dombey & Son*).

A VERY queer small boy.  
A little fellow with a heart as big as a mountain.

A wonderfully observant boy, saddened and aged by his father's misfortunes and his mother's neglect; a strange wide-eyed child who might have been Oliver Twist of the workhouse or have degenerated into an Artful Dodger of Seven Dials.

Yet "the inspired Cockney," as Mr. G. K. Chesterton has called him, was to become one of the really outstanding figures of his own generation and the Greatheart of English Literature!

Of all the stories told about this great creative genius and of all the wonderful stories which he told in his books of those lovable characters of his fancy, I like none better than the one in which he describes himself as the queer small boy who used to stare in wonder at a large mansion above the Rochester-to-Chatham road and be told by his father, the incomparable Mr. Micawber, that if he worked hard the day might yet come when he would own that enchanting palace.

Every child and every grown-up lover of Dickens

rejoices to know that the neglected child who became their favourite author did become the owner of Gad's Hill, that it became his home in later life, and that when, at fifty-eight years of age, the end came, it was here that he died.

A flame from the great and burning heart of Dickens leaps out at us as we read in *The Uncommercial Traveller* his own droll story of that fairy palace of his youth.

The now celebrated novelist is passing along the road to Canterbury when he meets a vision of his former self, the high-spirited, curly-haired, neglected little boy :

So smooth was the old high road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was teeming with ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

"Holloa," said I to the queer small boy. "Where do you live?"

"At Chatham," says he.

"What do you do there?"

"I go to school," says he.

I took him up in a moment and we went on. Presently the very queer small boy says :

"This is Gad's Hill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers and ran away."

"You know something about Falstaff?" says I.

"All about him," said the queer small boy; "I am old (I am nine) and I read all sorts of books. But do let us stop at the top of the hill and look at the house there, if you please."

"You admire that house?" said I.

"Bless you, sir!" said the very queer small boy, "when I was not more than half as old as nine it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And

now I am nine I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me :

*“ ‘ If you were to be very persevering and were to work hard you might some day come to live in it. ’ ”*

“ Though that’s impossible ! ” said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of the window with all his might.

I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy ; though that house happens to be my house, and I have reason to believe that what he said is true.

This was the boy who was accustomed on Sundays to visit his father in the Marshalsea Prison, where he was confined for debt. On weekdays he worked in a warehouse near the Strand, where he pasted labels on blacking-bottles for a living.

When fortune smiled again on Mr. Micawber, and he was freed from the debtors’ prison, he insisted that young Charles should leave his uncongenial work and return to school. Then the boy’s mother said her word, and Dickens was later to write :

I shall never forget, I can never forget, that my mother was warm for my being sent back (to that soul-destroying blacking warehouse). . . . I know but for the mercy of God I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

“ Good Heavens ! ” he would shudderingly exclaim, as he recalled those days, and especially his wanderings in Seven Dials. “ What wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want and beggary arose in my mind out of those places ! ”

Fortunately for him, his usually easy-going father won that domestic battle, and young Charles was

sent back to school. Yet he acknowledged afterwards that it was those harsh experiences of his youth that prepared him to become first, a successful reporter in the Press Galleries of Parliament, then a special correspondent with an amazing gift for descriptive writing, and finally the author of those books whose cheerful and immortal characters, a motley of Jingles, Quilps, Pickwicks, Winkles, Swivellers, Little Nells, Dicks, Dombey and Dodsons, have made themselves and their creator the intimates of every household.

Many of Dickens' characters are grotesque and misshapen, but they all have qualities which make them appear to us as real men and women rather than as fantastic types.

Kindness, laughter and caricature dance a merry jig through his pages, for he has a rich vein of humour, and a rare zest in life; yet there is a quickness of feeling and sincere spiritual fervour too. Some have accused him of being irreligious. But there is in fact no great novelist whose works are more strongly charged with religious feeling.

He was a churchman born, though he sometimes attacked his Church. Once he quarrelled with "the catechism and other formularies and subtleties; in reference to the young," in a puff of anger he actually became a Unitarian for a short while, but he soon returned to the fold of the Church of England. He also attacked what he thought to be wrong both in the Roman Church and in Nonconformity.

He hated cant, cruelty, obtrusiveness and hypocrisy; and though his hypocrites belong to a more exaggerated type than most of us have met with in our lifetime, none need deny that Stiggins



and Chadband are still to be encountered, perhaps in a measure in every one of us.

In his own preface to *Pickwick* he makes his position clear :

Lest there be those who do not perceive the difference between religion and cant, piety and pretence, a humble reverence for the truths of Scripture and an audacious and offensive obtrusion of its letter and not its spirit, let them understand it is always the latter and not the former that is satirised.

It is never out of season to protest against that familiarity with sacred things, or against that confounding of Christianity with any class of persons who have just enough religion to make them hate and not enough to make them love religion.

Yet he was prepared to admit that he had sometimes gone too far, as he had in describing Stiggins as a "reverend and red-nosed gentleman."

\* \* \* \* \*

As a young and energetic reporter Dickens had many opportunities of noting the real and the pretence among professors of religion. His journalistic reminiscences contain some absorbing reading :

I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which my brethren . . . can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer from my shorthand notes important speeches in which the strictest accuracy was required and a mistake in which would have been to a young man severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand by the light of a dark lantern in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country and through the dead of night at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. . . .

I once "took," as we used to call it, an election speech of Lord John Russell at the Devon contest in the midst of a lively fight maintained by all the vagabonds in the division . . . and under such a pelting rain that I remember two good-natured colleagues, who chanced to be at leisure, held a pocket-handkerchief over my note-book after the manner of a state canopy in an ecclesiastical procession. . . .

Returning home from exciting political meetings . . . to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of public vehicle known in this country. . . .

I have charged for broken hats, broken luggage, broken chaises, broken harness—everything but a broken head—which is the only thing they would have grumbled to pay for.

These quotations from Dickens I fear by no means fully show his religion, though to a journalist who has himself had experiences not altogether dissimilar from those given by the novelist, they are irresistible. And yet in a sense they do show a certain religious quality in the young Dickens. "Not slothful in business." He was honest, hard-working and reliable. He gave his employers full value for their money, just as he gave full value in fun, laughter and tears to those whom he served in later life.

When he was busy creating his characters he had no love for church bells, any more than have the journalists of my own day, and when he told a friend that the next issue of *Pickwick* must go with a bang he asked: "If you know anybody at St. Paul's I wish you'd ask them not to ring the bell so. I can hardly hear my own ideas as they come into my head and say what they mean."

Everybody found *Pickwick* exhilarating, including

the Archdeacon, who, said Carlyle, "with his own venerable lips repeated to me the other night a strange profane story: of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person; having finished, satisfactorily, as he thought, 'and got out of the room,' he heard the sick person ejaculate:

"'Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days' time.'"

To which Carlyle added:

"This is dreadful."

Yet, *pace* Carlyle, it is understandable, for there are many who have regarded the *Pickwick Papers* as the most astonishing work of fiction in the English language.

No wonder that a man who could write such an extravaganza of odd adventure as well as other works with their rich exuberance of humour and pathos and their enchanting whirl of excitement should himself be the centre of attentions when he visited America. So fantastic are some of his experiences that we are once more reminded of the immortal Pickwick as we read Dickens' personal recollections of his tour.

I can do nothing that I want to do, go nowhere where I want to go, and see nothing that I want to see. If I turn into the street, I am followed by a multitude. If I stay at home, the home becomes filled with callers, like a fair.

If I visit a public institution with only one friend, the directors come down incontinently, waylay me in the yard, and address me in a long speech. I go to a party in the evening, and am so inclosed and hemmed by people, stand where I will, that I am exhausted for want of air.

I dine out, and have to talk about everything to everybody. I go to church for quiet, and there is a violent rush to the neighbourhood of the pew I sit in, and the clergyman preaches at me. I take my seat in the railroad car, and the very conductor won't leave me alone.

I get out at a station, and can't drink a glass of water without having a hundred people looking down my throat when I open my mouth to swallow. Conceive what all this is.

Then by every post, letters on letters arrive all about nothing, and all demanding an immediate answer. This man is offended because I won't live in his house; and that man is thoroughly disgusted because I won't go out more than four times in one evening.

And when he does travel abroad in America, he is disgusted by a certain American habit. He sits with the ladies in their railway saloon and observes the men's smoker, which is between them and the engine :

The flashes of saliva flew so perpetually and incessantly out of the windows all the way that it looked as though they were ripping open feather-beds and letting the wind dispose of the feathers.

Nevertheless, like most Victorians, he was inclined to be just a little too cocksure in his judgment of the manners and morals of other nations.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was when he was in Boston, where the famous "tea-party" was held, that he had an experience which should provide an answer to those who objected to some of his sketches of religious leaders.

Though he was a member of the Church of England, and Nonconformity was less popular with his Church than now, he wrote in *American Notes* a pen-picture which caught the spirit of the

Nonconformity of his day, and gave a sympathetic and graphic portrait of a type of preacher known and loved by Free Churchmen all the world over.

The only preacher I heard in Boston was Mr. Taylor, who addresses himself peculiarly to seamen, and who was once a mariner himself.

I found his chapel down among the shipping, in one of the narrow old waterside streets, with a gay blue flag waving freely from its roof. . . .

The preacher already sat in the pulpit, which was raised on pillars and ornamented behind him with painted drapery of a lively and somewhat theatrical appearance. He looked a weather-beaten hard-featured man of about six or eight and fifty; with deep lines graven as it were into his face, dark hair and a stern keen eye. Yet the general appearance of his countenance was pleasant and agreeable. . . .

He opened his discourse, taking for his text a passage from the *Song of Solomon*: "Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on the arm of her beloved?"

He handled his text in all kinds of ways, and twisted it into all manner of shapes; but always ingeniously, and with a rude eloquence well adapted to the capability of his hearers. Indeed, if I be not mistaken, he studied their sympathies and understandings much more than the display of his own powers.

His imagery was all drawn from the sea and from the incidents of a seaman's life, and was often remarkably good. He spoke to them of that glorious man Lord Nelson, and of Collingwood. . . . Sometimes, when much excited with his subject, he had an odd way—compounded of John Bunyan and Balfour of Burleigh—of taking his great quarto Bible under his arm and pacing about the pulpit with it, looking steadily down meantime into the midst of the congregation. . . .

Thus, when he applied his text . . . and pictured the wonder of the church and their presumption in

forming a congregation amongst themselves, he stopped short with his Bible under his arm . . . and pursued his discourse after this manner :—

“Who are these?—Who are they?—Who are these fellows? Where do they come from? Where are they going to?”

“Come from! What’s the answer?”—leaning out of the pulpit and pointing downwards with his right hand—“From below!”—standing back again and looking at the sailors before him. “From below, my brethren. From under the hatches of sin, battened down above you by the evil one.

“That’s where you came from!”—a walk up and down the pulpit.

“And where are you going?”—stopping abruptly : “Where are you going? Aloft!”—very softly, and pointing upwards. “Aloft!”—louder : “Aloft”—louder still : “That’s where you are going—with a fair wind—all taut and trim, steering direct for heaven in its glory, where there are no storms or foul weather, and where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.”

Another walk—“That’s where you are going to, my friends. That’s it. That’s the place. That’s the port. That’s the haven. It’s a blessed harbour—still water there, in all changes of winds and tides, no driving ashore upon the rocks, or slipping your cables and running out to sea, there : Peace—Peace—Peace—all Peace.”

Another walk, and patting the Bible under his left arm : “What! These fellows are coming from the Wilderness, are they? Yes, from the dreary blighted Wilderness of Iniquity, whose only crop is Death. But do they lean upon anything—do they lean upon nothing, these poor seamen?”

Three raps on the Bible : “Oh yes, yes, yes. They lean upon the arm of their Beloved!”—three more, and a walk : “Pilot, Guiding-star and Compass, all in one to all hands—here it is”—three more : “here it is.

They can do their seaman's duty manfully and be easy in their minds in the utmost peril and danger with this"—two more: "They can come, even these poor fellows can come, from the wilderness leaning on the arm of their Beloved, and go up—up—up!"—raising his hand higher and higher at every repetition of the word, so that he stood with it at last stretched above his head, regarding them in a strange rapt manner, and pressing the Book triumphantly to his breast until he gradually subsided into some other form of his discourse.

Dickens explains that his favourable impression had been largely due to the fact that the preacher had quietly urged upon his hearers that the true observance of religion, so far from being inconsistent with a cheerful deportment and an exact discharge of the duties of their station, required those very things of them; he had moreover cautioned them against claiming for themselves any monopoly of Paradise.

"I never heard these two points so wisely touched (if indeed I have ever heard them touched at all) by any preacher of the kind before," said Dickens:

"To say, as some have done," writes Mr. Chesterton, "that he attacked Nonconformity, is quite a false way of putting it. It is clean across the whole trend of the man and his time to suppose that he could have felt bitterness against any theological body as a theological body; *but anything like religious extravagance whether Protestant or Catholic moved him to an extravagance of satire.*"

And he flung himself into the drunken energy of Stiggins, he piled up to the stars "the verbose flights of stairs of Mr. Chadband, exactly because

his own conception of religion was the quiet and impersonal morning prayer. It is typical of him that he had a peculiar hatred of speeches at the graveside."

And Mr. Chesterton accounts for Dickens' tenderness for the Church of England by saying that "something in those placid services, something in that reticent and humane liturgy, pleased him against all the tendencies of his time; pleased him in the best part of himself, his virile love of charity and peace."

Again in his brilliant and stimulating book Mr. Chesterton speaks

. . . of that apparent contradiction or dualism in Dickens . . . which in one shape or another constitutes the whole crux of his character. I mean the union of a general wildness approaching lunacy with a sort of secret moderation almost amounting to mediocrity.

Dickens was sensitive, theatrical, amazing, a bit of a dandy, a bit of a buffoon. . . . Yet it remains true that he had in him a central part that was pleased only by the most decent and the most reposeful rites, by things of which the Anglican Prayer Book is most typical.

But Dickens was not so sympathetic towards Mr. Chesterton's religion as his critic is towards the form of religion which Dickens professed.

When the novelist visits Lausanne he records :

In the valley of the Simplon hard by here where . . . this Protestant canton ends and a Catholic canton begins you might separate two perfectly distinct and different conditions of humanity by drawing a line with your stick in the dust on the ground : on the Protestant side, neatness, cheerfulness, industry, education ; con-



tinual aspiration at least after better things. On the Catholic side, dirt, disease, ignorance, squalor and misery.

I have so constantly observed the like of this since I first came abroad, that I have a sad misgiving that the religion of Ireland lies as deep at the root of all its sorrows even as English misgovernment and Tory villainy.

Yet he speaks of the "No Popery" riots with abhorrence :

Those shameful tumults, while they reflect indelible disgrace upon the time . . . and all who had act or part in them, teach a good lesson : that what we falsely call a religious cry is easily raised by men who have no religion and who in their daily practice set at naught the commonest principle of right and wrong ; that it is begotten of intolerance and persecution : that it is senseless, besotted, inveterate and unmerciful ; all history teaches us.

"However imperfectly these disturbances are set forth in the following pages," he says in his preface to *Barnaby Rudge*, "they are impartially painted by one who has no sympathy with the Romish Church, though he acknowledges as most men do some esteemed friends among the followers of its creed."

When Dickens visits Avignon and proceeds to the ancient palace of the Popes, he is reminded of the "unholy and infamous Inquisition," and is shocked to see a representation of the Parable of the Good Samaritan on the Chapel of the Holy Office. He notes how the roof of the torture chamber is so constructed as to muffle the screams of the victims. He pictures the sunburnt arms of the conductress as she describes the wheel on which

the living bodies of the martyrs were broken with an endless routine of heavy hammers :

Mash, mash, mash upon the sufferers' limbs.

See the stone trough ! . . . For the water torture !

Gurgle, swill, bloat, burst, for the Redeemer's honour !

Suck the bloody rag deep down into your unbelieving body, heretic, at every breath you draw.

And when the executioner plucks it out reeking with the smaller mysteries of God's own image, know us for His chosen servants, true believers in the Sermon on the Mount, elect disciples of Him who never did a miracle but to heal ; who never struck a man with palsy, blindness, deafness, drunkenness, madness, any one affliction of mankind ! and never stretched His blessed hand out but to give relief and ease.

He writes of the Dreadful Pit, where the executioner of the Inquisition flung those who were past all further torturing.

And when in Rome he reflects :

When I thought how Christian men have dealt with one another ; how, perverting our most merciful religion, they have hunted down and tortured, burnt and beheaded, strangled, slaughtered and oppressed each other, I pictured to myself an agony surpassing anything that this dust had suffered. . . .

And when he contemplates the suppression of the monasteries in England, he is confident that many of these religious establishments were religious in nothing but name, and were crammed with lazy, indolent and sensual monks ; and that they imposed upon the people in every possible way.

Yet though he thinks that the Pope's bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth is " a mere dirty piece

of paper, not half so powerful as a street ballad," he has no wish to whitewash Henry the Eighth. He says that the mighty merit of the Reformation lies with other men, and not with him; "and it can be rendered none the worse for this monster's crimes, and none the better by any defence of them. The plain truth is that he was a most intolerable ruffian, a disgrace to human nature, and a blot of blood and grease upon the history of England."

And of Bloody Queen Mary he is just as emphatic :

As Bloody Queen Mary this woman has become famous, and as Bloody Queen Mary she will ever be remembered with horror and detestation in Great Britain. . . .

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said Our Saviour.

The stake and the fire were the fruits of this reign, and you will judge this queen by nothing else.

But it is a clergyman of the Church of England who receives the most unqualified commendation that Dickens ever bestowed—a commendation given for an act of mercy rendered in a great catastrophe.

The *Royal Charter*, returning to England from Australia, was lost off Anglesey, and five hundred were drowned. The incumbent of the lone parish near the wreck was one of the first helpers.

Dickens went to see him and

. . . read more of the New Testament in the fresh frank face going up the village beside me in five minutes than I have read in anathematising discourses in all my life. I heard more of the Sacred Book in the cordial voice that had nothing to say about its owner than in all the would-be celestial pairs of bellows that have ever blown conceit out of me. . . .

Down to yesterday's post outward my clergyman alone had written one thousand and seventy-five letters to relatives and parents of lost people. . . .

If I had lost anyone dear to me in the unfortunate

ship, if I had made a voyage from Australia to look at the grave in the churchyard, I should go away thankful to God that that house [the clergyman's] was so close to it, and that its shadow by day and its domestic light by night fell upon the earth in which its master had so tenderly laid my dear one's head.

Dickens' sympathies were boundless.

Certainly he should be read again and again by those modern Christians who forget human need and human emotion. Listen to him as he describes a woman with a new baby expecting to meet her husband when their boat arrives at St. Louis :

She was a little woman, with a little baby, and both little woman and little child were cheerful, good-looking and fair to see.

And so, with his tender touch, he shows us the joy and pathos of that meeting of husband and wife and of the father's first sight of their child :

Then a great crowd of people rushed on board, though the boat was not yet made fast and was staggering about among the other boats to find a landing-place; and everybody looked for the husband and nobody saw him, when all of a sudden, right in the midst of them—God knows how she ever got there—there was the little woman, hugging with both arms round the neck of a fine good-looking sturdy fellow.

And in a moment afterwards there she was again, dragging him through the small door of her small cabin to look at the baby as he lay asleep ! What a good thing it is to know that so many of us would have been quite down-hearted and sorry if that husband had failed to come !

When he is in the Southern States the slavery question confronts him. His answers to those who would enlist his sympathies on its behalf are bold, uncompromising, and even final.

He protests that they won't let him alone upon

the subject. A certain judge in St. Louis went so far that Dickens fell upon him :

I told him that I could sympathise with men who admitted it to be a dreadful evil but frankly confessed their inability to devise a means of getting rid of it, but that men who spoke of it as a blessing, as a matter of course, as a state of things to be desired, were out of the pale of reason. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

"It's not," said a bad-looking fellow to me the other day, "it's not the interest of a man to use his slaves ill. It's damned nonsense that you hear in England." . .

I told him quietly that it was not a man's interest to get drunk or to steal or to game or to indulge any other vice, but he did indulge in it for all that.

That cruelty and the abuse of irresponsible power were two of the bad passions of human nature, with the gratification of which considerations of interest or ruin had nothing to do; and that while every candid man must admit that even a slave might be happy enough with a good master, all human beings knew that bad masters, cruel masters, and masters who disgraced the form they bore, were matters of experience and history whose existence was as undisputed as that of slaves themselves.

He was a little taken aback by this, and asked me if I believed in the Bible.

"Yes," I said, "but if any man could prove to me that it sanctioned slavery, I would place no further credence in it."

"Well, then," he said. "By God, sir, the niggers must be kept down, and the whites have put down coloured people wherever they found them."

"That's the whole question," said I.

And who will deny that Dickens, in a few simple able words demolished the whole case for slavery?

\* \* \* \* \*

Forster's *Life of Dickens* points out that although Dickens regarded the gin-shop as the national horror, he thought the temperance agitation should not make it their exclusive object of attack, but should take into account many operative causes which had brought the gin-shop into existence. In these he included disgusting habitations, foul smells, bad workshops, workshop customs, scarcity of light, air and water and the absence of the amenities of health and decency. Dickens rightly saw that these evils were reflected in the use which men made of their leisure. And that it would not be possible to ensure for the worker the wholesome recreation which is as necessary to him as sun and air, until those evils had been tackled.

"He thought that drunkenness had a teeming and reproachful history anterior to the drunken stage and that it was the first duty of the moralist bent on annihilating the gin-shop to strike deep and spare not at these previously remediable evils."

He had the greatest contempt for the Turf and the race-crowd. Everywhere he went he saw the face of the late Mr. Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, with his betting-book in his hand. It was Mr. Palmer who sat next to him at the theatre, who went before him down the street, who followed him into the chemist's shop and said, "Give us some *sal volatile* or soom damned thing o' that soort in wather—my head's bad."

And as he looked at the back of this man's bad head, "repeated in long lines on the race-course, and in the betting-stand and outside the betting-rooms in the towns," he vowed to God that he

could see nothing in it but cruelty, covetousness, calculation, insensibility and low wickedness.

Had Dickens been sent to write up the Derby for a modern daily newspaper he would perhaps have said nothing about the race, and have been "fired" on his return. But I am sure that he would have given us an enchanting picture of the Derby Day crowd.

\* \* \* \* \*

The genius of Dickens uses every appeal of which humour and pathos are capable to expose the evils of his day and to win sympathy for those who suffer from them.

He attacks gambling in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, cruelty to children and bad education in *David Copperfield* and *Little Dorrit*, Bumbledon in *Oliver Twist*, imprisonment for debt in *Pickwick Papers*, slavery and piracy in *American Notes*, the evils of company promoting and the bad nursing of Mrs. Gamp in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the bad marriage and divorce laws in *Hard Times*, and the devastating meanness of the worst kind of employer in *The Christmas Carol*.

He strove to keep children away from the contaminating atmosphere of prisons, and it was his powerful advocacy that ended so far as this country is concerned all executions in public. But we still have capital punishment, though Dickens tried to secure its abolition.

He was dissatisfied with the religious instruction given to the children. He dissented from the comfortable conviction that a parrot-like acquaintance with the Church Catechism and the Commandments was enough shoe-leather for poor pilgrims

at the Slough of Despond, or sufficient armour against Giant Despair or Giant Slay-Good—and a sort of Parliamentary fare for third-class passengers to the beautiful gate of the Celestial City. He advocated schools of industry where the simple knowledge which they had learned from their books would be made directly useful and immediately applicable to the duties of life, to order, cleanliness, punctuality, and economy. He believed that the sublime lessons of the New Testament should be at the bottom of all education.

Schools conducted on such principles, and touching the very dregs of human society, were the only means of ensuring in the nineteenth century of Our Lord that the children of this country would grow up with some knowledge of Him.

His great heart expanded towards the whole world. He thought there were no pleasures like the pleasures of the poor. If he was frigid towards any it was towards the privileged class; he had a contempt for toadyism and flunkeyism, and took care to keep out of the houses of the great. But he despaired of none.

“There are strange chords in the human heart,” he wrote in *Sketches by Box*, “which will lie dormant through years of depravity and wickedness, but which will vibrate at last to some slight circumstance apparently trivial in itself, but connected by some undefined and indistinct association with past days that can never be recalled, and with bitter recollections from which the most degraded creature in existence cannot escape.”

But he continues his mocking onslaughts against those pseudo-Christians whose demeanour would



repel the despairing prodigal or make the words of the Children's Friend unattractive to the children. That indictment of the sour-faced Christian in *David Copperfield* must have won him sympathy from Christians and non-Christians alike.

I well remember the tremendous visages with which we used to go to church. . . .

Again the dreaded Sunday comes round, and I file into the old pew first, like a guarded captive brought to a condemned service.

Again Miss Murdstone, in a black velvet gown, that looks as if it had been made out of a pall, follows close upon me; then my mother; then her husband. Again I listen to Miss Murdstone mumbling the responses and emphasising all the dread words with a cruel relish.

Again I see her dark eyes roll round the church when she says "miserable sinners," as if she were calling the congregation names. Again I wonder with a sudden fear whether it is likely that our good clergyman can be wrong, and Miss Murdstone right, and that all the angels in heaven can be destroying angels.

Again if I move a finger or relax a muscle of my face Miss Murdstone pokes me with her prayer-book, and makes my side ache.

What a sympathetic touch he always has for children! So in *The Old Curiosity Shop* we find him saying :

How many of the mounds in that old churchyard where she had lately strayed grew green above the graves of children. And though she thought as a child herself, and did not perhaps sufficiently consider to what a bright and happy existence those who die young are borne . . . her dreams were of the little scholar : not confined and covered up, but mingling with angels and smiling happily.

And what finer piece of Christian teaching is contained anywhere outside of the Bible than that

which Dickens introduces into *The Hunted Man*?

"May I tell you," said Milly, "why it seems a good thing for us to remember wrong that has been done us?"

"Yes."

"That we may forgive it."

Again and again there is a sympathetic note for the poor:

Cant as we may and as we shall to the end of things, it is very much harder for the poor to be virtuous than the rich, and the good that is in them shines the brighter for it.

His description of the drunkard's death gives us the atmosphere of the tavern at its worst and goes a long way to excuse those other tavern scenes in which he sometimes revels. The drunkard reels home to see his wife die—"she alone had clung to him in good and evil, in sickness and poverty, and how had he rewarded her?" He rushes remorsefully back to the tavern:

Glass succeeded glass. His blood mounted and his brain whirled round.

Death! Everyone must die, and why not she?

She was too good for him; her relations had often told him so. Curses on them! Had they not deserted her and left her to while away the time at home? Well, she was dead, and happy perhaps. It was better as it was.

Another glass—one more! Hurrah! It was a merry life while it lasted; and he would make the most of it.

Yet in *Oliver Twist*, Mrs. Maylie sounds a more cheerful note, although the theme is still the same. For she has seen enough to know that it is not always the youngest and best who are spared to those that love them. But this should give us comfort in our sorrow; for Heaven is just; and such partings teach us impressively that there is a

brighter world than this ; and that the passage to it is speedy.

“ God’s will be done ! I love her ; and He knows how well.”

And who but Dickens would have written this ?

If the spirits of the dead ever come back to earth, to visit spots hallowed by the love—the love beyond the grave—of those whom they knew in life, I believe that the shade of Agnes sometimes hovers round that solemn nook. I believe it none the less because that nook is a church, and she was weak and erring.

\* \* \* \* \*

As one of the greatest of the world’s writers Dickens is immortal ; as a human being he had the weaknesses of common humanity.

He was at times irritable and restless, that irritability and restlessness which are inseparable from great genius. It had something to do with the failure of his marriage ; and indeed his wife was not only unequal to her duties as the mother of her large family, but was unable to give him the companionship which he desired.

He writes :

Poor Catherine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it.

It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but that I make her so too—and much more so.

She is amiable and complying, but we are strangely ill-assorted for the bond there is between us.

God knows she would have been a thousand times happier if she had married another kind of man, and that her avoidance of this destiny would have been equally good for us both.

I am often cut to the heart by thinking what a pity it is that I ever fell in her way, and if I were sick or disabled to-morrow I know how sorry she would be, and how deeply grieved myself that we had lost each other.

But exactly the same incompatibility would arise the moment I was well again, and nothing on earth could make her understand me or suit us to each other. Her temperament will not go with mine. . . .

But the years have not made it easier to bear for either of us; and for her sake as well as mine the wish will force itself upon me that something might be done.

His early correspondence with her testified to the depth of his love. He wrote a prayer for their joint use which she always kept.

Yet he seemed to forget the sentiments of that prayer and the teaching of his books in his attitude towards those who attacked him because of his marriage failure. He gave absurd orders to his children, he fell into rages, and foolishly wrote letters to the Press in vindication of himself and his wife.

For awhile it would seem that his success had turned to conceit. Yet in his heart none knew better than he that it was his duty to forgive his detractors and to suffer in silence, as his last paragraph in *The Life of Our Lord*, recently published by the *Daily Mail*, gives ample evidence :

Remember !

It is Christianity to do good always—even to those who do evil to us.

It is Christianity to love our neighbour as ourself, and to do to all men as we would have them do to us.

It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities quiet in our own hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers or of our love of God, but always to show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything.

If we do this, and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we

may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in Peace.

When a correspondent drew Dickens' attention to a statement in one of his writings which might be interpreted as a reflection on Holy Writ, he replied by saying that he was truly shocked that any reader could have made such a mistake.

He had in his writings always striven to express veneration for the life and teaching of Christ—  
“*because I feel it*” !

He told his correspondent that this was why he had re-written his story of Jesus for his children, although every one of them knew it already from having heard it repeated to them long before they could read, and almost as soon as they could speak.

“But I have never made proclamation of this from the house-tops.”

He makes the same explanation in his letter to the Rev. R. H. Davies, assuring him that there could not be many men who had a more humble veneration for the New Testament than he, or a more profound conviction of its all-sufficiency.

If his attitude on this subject was mistaken by others, it was because he discountenanced all obtrusive professions of religion as one of the main reasons why the progress of real Christianity had been retarded in this world ; “and because my observations of life induce me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror those unseemly squabbles about the letter which drive the spirit out of hundreds of thousands.”

\* \* \* \* \*

To fathers whose sons are leaving home, the

letter of simple piety which Dickens wrote to his own son who was leaving for Australia may be commended as a helpful model.

He writes thus because he thinks that his son should have a few parting words from him to think over now and then at quiet times :

I need not tell you that I love you very dearly, and am very, very sorry in my heart to part with you. But this life is half made up of partings, and these pains must be borne.

It is my comfort and my sincere conviction that you are going to try the life for which you are best fitted. I think its freedom and wildness more suited to you than any experiment in a study or office would have been; and without that training you could have followed no other suitable occupation.

What you have always wanted until now has been a set steady purpose. I therefore exhort you to persevere in a thorough determination to do whatever you have to do as well as you can do it.

I was not so old as you are now when I first had to win my food, and to do it out of this determination; and I have never slackened in it since. Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power.

Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule than that *you* should.

I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty can possibly be guided.

As your brothers have gone away one by one, I have

written to each such words as I am now writing to you, and am entreating them all to guide themselves by this Book, putting aside the interpretations and inventions of man.

You will remember that at home you have never been harassed about religious observances or mere formalities, and I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they were old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian religion as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.

Only one thing more on this head. The more we are in earnest as to feeling it, the less we are disposed to hold forth about it. *Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself and I know the comfort of it.*

I hope you will always be able to say in after life that you had a kind father. You cannot show your affection for him so well or make him so happy as by doing your duty.

\* \* \* \* \*

When his will was read it was found that Dickens had put into it another uncompromising declaration of his religious beliefs which perhaps compensated for his reticence during his life-time to witness more freely to the faith and fire within him.

I commit my soul to the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and I exhort my dear children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teaching of the New Testament in its broad spirit, and to put no faith in any man's narrow construction of its letter here or there.

He directed that he should be buried in as inexpensive a manner as possible; that no public

announcement should be made of the time or place of his funeral; that no black bows, long hat-bands or other such revolting absurdities should be worn, and that his name should be inscribed on his tomb in plain English without the addition of "Mr." or "Esquire."

His wishes were respected.

\* \* \* \* \*

Charles Dickens, our greatest novelist and one of our greatest Christian teachers, was secretly buried in Westminster Abbey.

Facing his tomb and on its left and right are the monuments of three more of our immortals, Dryden, Chaucer, and—Shakespeare.

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# WASHINGTON



## WASHINGTON

*If ever a square man lived, Washington was that man.*  
He believed in the Golden Rule and he practised it—not only in church, but in business.

*Paul Leland Harworth.*

ADMIRAL "JACKY" FISHER, who invented the Dreadnought and modernised the British Navy for the Great War, was asked by an American millionairess :

"Who was the greatest Englishman?"

"George Washington," flashed back the ready-witted British Admiral.

The unexpected answer was more truthful and far more polite than the famous remark of another Englishman who said :

George Washington was the first gentleman of America—and the last !

\* \* \* \* \*

Washington looked a man of marble. He was a strong man of great passions dominated by an inflexible will.

Carlyle called him a bloodless Cromwell.

He was tall, as tall as Lincoln, about 6 ft. 4 in., as strong as a giant, and a great English gentleman.

When marching in a State procession, or riding his white charger on some ceremonial parade, or even slumbering in an Indian's wigwam, he was a magnificent personage.

His erect, handsome figure proclaimed him a

favourite, if not a son of the gods; his life-story leaves no doubt that he was called by Providence for a sublime purpose.

Perhaps that purpose was not fully revealed to him; although we know that he liberated his people, became the Father of his country, and taught his brother Englishmen a valuable lesson in how to govern their colonies.

The American people have used up most of the superlatives in our language to describe their spotless warrior-statesman. He has been called, among many other things, the world's greatest citizen.

Plays have been produced and films created from the lives of the world's great men; but I fear we shall never see a good representation of the life of George Washington. His tall and martial figure, towering among the few great men who have also been good, offers little scope to stage or screen. Was he too magnificent for the footlights and too noble for the films?

Napoleon read of his achievements as soldier and statesman and declared that they could only be explained as the Finger of God!

He ordered that a memorial to Washington be erected in Paris. There is another in London, outside the National Gallery.

\* \* \* \* \*

A wily Indian chieftain who led his braves victoriously against Washington's irregulars told them to mark that tall and daring warrior, who was not one of the English red-coat tribe, but who fought with the Indian's wisdom.

“Quick! let your aim be certain, and he dies.”

Rifles were levelled and fired, but as always, they missed Washington. Though he exposed himself in the danger-spots of many battles, he was never once struck by hostile weapon or missile.

The Indian chief observed his exploits with reluctant admiration and exclaimed :

*The Great Spirit guides and protects this pale-faced brave.  
He will become a mighty chief of many nations !*

Several times defeated, usually on account of having insufficient troops, or through the arrogant incompetence of superior officers, always fighting great odds, facing the most revolting horrors, young Washington was constantly in need of the special protection which the Indian chief claimed he possessed. Especially when he fought under the British flag against the French and their red allies.

Pioneer life in the Ohio Territory was then a prolonged terror.

Supernatural help was needed to handle such scenes as this :

One day (says Washington) as we drew near through the woods to a dwelling, suddenly we heard the discharge of a gun; whereupon, quickening our pace and creeping up through the thick bushes of the fence, we saw what we had dreaded—a party of Indians, loaded with plunder, coming out of a house, which by the smoke appeared as though it had just been set on fire.

In a moment we gave the savages a shower of rifle-balls which killed every man of them but one, who attempted to run off, but in vain; for some of our swift-footed hunters gave chase and soon overtook and demolished him with their tomahawks.

On rushing into the house and putting out the fire,

we saw a mournful sight indeed—a young woman lying on the bed—her forehead cleft with a hatchet—and on her breast two little children, apparently twins, and about nine months old, bathing her bosom with blood flowing from their deeply-gashed heads.

I have often beheld mangled remains of my murdered countrymen, but never before felt what I did on this occasion. To see these poor innocents, these little unoffending angels, just entered upon life, and instead of fondest sympathy and tenderness, meeting their bloody deaths, *and from the hands of brothers too, filled my soul with the deepest horror of sin.*

On tracing the steps of the barbarians back into the cornfield we found a little boy and beyond him his father, both weltering in blood. It appeared from the print of little feet in the furrows that the child had been following his father's plough, and seeing him shot down, had set off with all his might to get to the house to his mother, but was overtaken and destroyed.

Wherever Washington went in those days he had to listen to similar tales: "a neighbour's family perhaps the very night before was murdered . . . they had heard their cries . . . they themselves, after saying their prayers at night (said he) never lay down to sleep without first taking leave of one another!" And here we get at the heart of Washington and catch a glimpse of his religion, when he says that:

These things so filled my heart with grief that I solemnly declare to God, if I know myself, *I would gladly offer my own life a sacrifice to the butchering enemy*, if I could but thereby insure the safety of my poor distressed countrymen.

\* \* \* \* \*

But his life was not taken; he continued to be marvellously protected. Presently the French re-

treat, the Indians become friendly and the pioneers sleep safely in their beds.

The prophecy of the Indian chieftain is beginning to be fulfilled.

When one of Washington's comrades congratulates him on an especially fortunate escape, he tells him what he thinks is the real secret of his protected life :

I shall not despair so long as I know that one faithful saint is praying for me.

He knew that at a set time each day his mother regularly honoured her promise to pray for his protection and success.

From her he drew his sense of religion together with a spirit of command, a habit of obedience and strong sense of justice. His father patiently taught him trust in God and truthfulness—hence the story of the axe and the cherry-tree.

He spelt his son's name in seeds sown in the garden. When the surprised boy traced the name **GEORGE WASHINGTON** in the young plants, his father used the occasion to teach him to look for the Unseen Hand of Providence in his own life.

\* \* \* \* \*

Washington's honest nature and calm resolution were born with him. They were early tested.

As a boy he mounted an untamed and highly-couraged Arab colt and clung on dauntlessly during all its wild caperings and plungings until it suddenly stopped and fell down, beaten only in death. The excited animal had broken a blood-vessel.

To have confessed such a loss to his strong-willed mother must have required almost as much courage

as the wild ride itself. But Washington at thirteen or fourteen had already worked out a rule of life and conduct which was equal to most occasions.

\* \* \* \* \*

Treasured in the State archives at Washington is a little book entitled *Forms of Writing*, which, though the mice at Mount Vernon, Washington's home, once fed off its edges, is still worth an immense fortune.

Written when a lad, this volume contains a hundred and ten "Rules of Behaviour in Company and Conversation."

It is George Washington's Sermon to Himself—on Mount Vernon! Though he had written it before he was installed there.

Some of the rules may seem priggish, but they are a remarkable collection, and point to the noble character which more than fulfilled the promise of youth.

"Let your recreations be manful and not sinful," wrote young Washington. "Use not reproachful language against anyone; neither curse nor revile."

He put these two rules into force in his army of "tatterdemalions"—at one time there was not a whole pair of breeches to be seen in the ranks—and issued orders threatening that any man heard to use an oath would be severely punished.

The General most earnestly requires and expects a due observance of those articles of war . . . which forbid profane cursing, swearing and drunkenness.

And in like manner he requires and expects of all officers and soldiers, not engaged on actual duty, a punctual attendance on Divine service, to implore the blessing of Heaven upon the means used for our safety and defence.



"Avoid gaming," he wrote to his nephew. "This is a vice which is productive of every possible evil; equally injurious to the morals and health of its votaries.

"It is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and the father of mischief.

"It has been the ruin of many worthy families, the loss of many a man's honour, and the cause of suicide."

\* \* \* \* \*

The beauty of his nature was certain to bring him enemies.

Several of his generals were against him. Arnold, proud as Lucifer, was stung to hatred and treason, because Washington, insisting that the recreations of his officers and men should be manful, and not sinful, had sharply reprimanded him for his evil practices.

He addressed the court-martialled general with calm dignity :

Our profession is the chastest of all. Even the shadow of a fault tarnishes the lustre of our achievements. The least inadvertence may rob us of public favour so hard to be acquired.

I reprimand you for having *forgotten* that, in proportion as you have rendered yourself formidable to your enemies, you should have been guarded and temperate in your deportment towards your fellow-citizens.

Exhibit anew those noble qualities which have placed you on the list of our most valued commanders. I will furnish you as far as it may be in my power with opportunities of regaining the esteem of your country.

Arnold did not regain the esteem of his country.

He sulked, turned traitor, and agreed to sell to the enemy for three thousand pounds his command at West Point (the American Sandhurst).

André, the handsome young British major who served as intermediary, was caught with the papers which incriminated both of them, and was gibbeted as a spy, while Washington's staff and troops looked on.

Arnold decamped, just as his commander-in-chief arrived unexpectedly, and, despite numerous attempts at capture, escaped safely to England, where he died remorsefully demanding to be arrayed in the general's uniform he had betrayed.

Yet he had no just cause to complain against Washington, whose treatment of him had in every respect conformed with another of the rules he had made as a lad :

Before you advise or find fault with anyone, consider whether it ought to be in public or in private, present, or at some other time; in what terms to do it; and in reproving show no sign of anger, but do it with sweetness and mildness.

\* \* \* \* \*

But in war-time these rules were not always capable of translation into practice. This one, for instance :

Undertake not what you cannot perform, but be careful to keep your promise.

Because they were rebels, some British officers treated their prisoners with cruelty. Washington protested that the obligations arising from the rights of humanity were universally binding . . . and unless amends were made he threatened reprisals.

If severity and hardships mark the line of your conduct, painful as it may be to me, your prisoners will feel its effects.

But if kindness and humanity are shown to us I shall

with pleasure consider those in our hands only as unfortunate, and they shall receive from me the treatment to which the unfortunate are ever entitled.

But the British regarded Washington as an old fox; and the same treatment of which he had so often complained was repeated. Therefore Washington proceeded to take reprisals.

These were, however, of a half-hearted nature, and presently he allowed the imprisoned officers to resume their parole.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Show not yourself glad at the misfortune of another, though he be your enemy,” was an early rule persistently honoured in after life; and he never sought to lessen the merits of others, nor to give more than due praise. He said that you must not observe or dwell upon the blemishes of other people, or play the peacock, “looking everywhere about you to see if you are well-decked; if your shoes fit well; if your pantaloons sit neatly and your clothes handsomely.”

He held that in company action ought to show some sign of respect to those present.

His rule for the table was :

Make no show of taking delight in your victuals.

Feed not with greediness.

Cut your food with a knife, and lean not on the table.

Neither find fault with what you eat.

Lincoln said that it was his practice always to plant a flower where a flower would grow.

Perhaps it was from Washington that he drew his kindred phrase “With malice toward none,” for as a lad Washington decided to let his conversation be without malice or envy, for such was the sign of

a kindly and commendable nature; and to allow his passion to yield to reason.

\* \* \* \*

Though nearly always composed, there were moments in the war when he could not restrain his passion. At Monmouth, in an encounter with the jealous and deceitful General Lee, Washington lost his temper with good reason.

It was the gloomiest period of the war. He had been compelled to withdraw his little army from New York; there had been retreat after retreat undertaken in the hope of keeping his own army in being until it could be reinforced.

The *moral* was not high. "When are we going to stop retreating?" asked an officer. Washington may have disliked his tone. He replied calmly:

"If it becomes necessary we will retreat over every river and mountain in America."

Meanwhile, behind closed doors intrigues against him were proceeding both in his army and in Congress. Lee, victorious in the south, was freely canvassed as the man who was to be Commander-in-Chief when Washington should be relieved of his post.

There was hunger and cold, desertions were numerous, spies and treason abounded. Yet he held on hopefully, confident that "Providence which has brought us out of many difficulties will yet crown our righteous cause with success."

The night before the engagement at Monmouth a clergyman galloped up to his headquarters and mysteriously demanded admission. It was refused.

He insisted. He had secret and important intelligence to communicate.

When admitted, he warned Washington that, though he could not disclose the source of his information, he had reason to know that Lee intended to betray the army in to-morrow's battle.

"Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the injury of any," was one of the rules in Washington's code. Unfortunately in the case of Lee he adhered to it. But he kept near at hand ready for emergencies.

News came that his men were retiring with the enemy in pursuit. Washington galloped up to Lee and demanded to know why the army was retreating.

Lee impudently said that he had given the order.

High and passionate words passed between them, and Washington, calling his General a "cowardly poltroon," ordered him off the field.

Fearing a personal attack on his chief, the aide-de-camp drew his sword. But Washington dashed on to rally his troops, as he had so often done before. Next day the enemy retreated. Lee was court-martialled and left the service. Many years afterwards papers were discovered which proved him to have been a traitor.

\* \* \* \*

There are no stories of fights by Washington as a schoolboy; on the contrary, he gained a reputation as peacemaker. Though he possessed reckless courage, he was ready to appear the coward rather than disregard the rules on which he based his conduct.

"Speak not evil of the absent, for it is unjust," he had laid down. Yet once in later life, when he had achieved a high reputation, he was to break his own canon of conduct.

He had just returned from a most successful embassy to the French, whose intention to grab the Ohio Territory he had discovered through being the only sober person present at a dinner in the French officers' mess. His diary had just been published as a State paper, and he was now the hero of the hour, the toast at every table.

Interrupting an election meeting, he said that character was the highest qualification for votes; he spoke favourably of one candidate and sarcastically of the other. This was taken to be an aspersion on the character of the latter candidate, and one of his supporters attacked Washington with a stick and knocked him down.

Friends sprang to his aid, and would have severely handled the assailant had not Washington intervened and taken the blame, because of his hasty remark, begging that there should be no more trouble.

Some of the onlookers may have thought him a coward. Nevertheless, he went further. He wrote to the insulted candidate and asked him to call in the morning.

Taking this to be a challenge to a duel, the candidate thoughtfully brought along his pistol! But Washington greeted him at the door with a handshake and an apology for having made free of his character in an unguarded moment.

That was Washington's way of punishing himself for breaking his own rule and speaking evil of the absent. The same point of view was rather differently expressed in the Sermon on the Mount—"first be reconciled with thy brother."

\* \* \* \* \*

As they were leaving a refreshment house, he

saw that his aide-de-camp had knocked off a stone from the garden wall, and proposed to leave it for the next comer to replace. Washington dismounted, picked it up, and put it back, saying that he liked to leave a place as good as he found it.

But—America has yet to tell us what he said to the golfer who neglected to replace his divots !

\* \* \* \* \*

During those bitter days at Valley Forge, when defeat seemed inevitable and the half-starved little army was particularly disgruntled, Washington, when leaving his headquarters, spoke to his sentry and found him tired out and hungry.

He told him to go in and dine at his table. The sentry answered that he dared not leave his post, upon which Washington, it is said, took over his duty. Napoleon did something very similar in Italy. I hope it's true of Washington !

Tradition has a still more moving story of him in those days—of how he was seen kneeling in a wood and praying for his army and a reversal of their recent ill-fortunes. The story is disputed, but Washington was a churchman and a man of prayer, though not a regular communicant, for in his time Holy Communion was not so often celebrated or so well attended as to-day, when there are more services and perhaps fewer saints !

Once a doctor of divinity was among Washington's guests at dinner, but the General himself said grace. Mrs. Washington reminded him that he had a clergyman dining with him that day, to which he pleasantly replied :

“My dear, I wish clergymen and all men to know that I am not a graceless man.”

Woodrow Wilson recorded that a little child remembered how he prayed at her father's house upon the eve of battle; how he had taken the Scripture out of Joshua, and had cried :

The Lord God of gods, He knoweth, and Israel he shall know; if it be rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord. (Save us not this day.)

“There was here the same note of solemnity and of self-forgetful devotion as if duty and honour alike were inevitable.”

In a circular letter sent to his governors he made it his earnest prayer that God would have them in His holy protection, and that He would most graciously be pleased to dispose all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean themselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, they could never hope to be a happy nation.

In the period of tension just before the outbreak of the War for Independence, Congress ordered a day of national humiliation and fasting. He wrote laconically in his diary :

*FASTED ALL DAY.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Appointed Commander-in-Chief, Washington told Congress that he accepted the post though he felt unequal to the task. Yet to his wife he wrote :

“I shall rely confidently on that Providence which has hitherto preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting that I shall return safe to you in the fall.”



Yet, as life is always uncertain, he enclosed his will.

His first meeting with her led to the one reported instance in Washington's life when he failed in a patriotic duty.

He was on the way to Williamsburg to arrange supplies for his forces when he was invited unexpectedly to dinner at a mansion in New Kent.

Accepting, but only on condition that he should be allowed to leave immediately after dinner, he ordered his horses to be in waiting at the door.

Inside he met the beautiful young widow who was subsequently known as "Lady Washington." Dinner was served and over, and still the horses stood without.

After a long wait they were ordered back to the stable. Next morning Washington and his servant travelled at breakneck speed to Williamsburg.

He continued to find time for prayer and meditation, and as the tide of battle ebbed against him, his moral energy increased. Because the situation was so desperate he was entirely unforgiving to coward or traitor; but he persisted in being kind to the unfortunate. No man who had done his best had anything to fear from him even in defeat.

But during those long periods of retreat and reverse he often displayed masterly skill in the offensive. There were lightning raids behind the enemy's lines, and assaults to flank and rear; there was the gallant dash out of New York to Brooklyn and back again, the quiet withdrawal at night while the enemy opposite eagerly anticipated the decisive battle next day, and the unexpected descent on

British food and ammunition dumps; all culminating presently in final victory at Yorktown.

\* \* \* \* \*

All through the eight-years war he had laboured, as he put it, to keep in his heart that little spark of celestial fire called conscience. And when the battle of Yorktown was won and Cornwallis captured he wrote :

The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations.

He was fortunate in having Cornwallis for his opponent and not Wellington. Perhaps that too was part of the scheme of Providence that shaped his destiny. For it is unthinkable that these two great Englishmen should have been opposed to one another in a struggle which a little good sense might well have avoided.

Nevertheless, however tactless George the Third's methods were, he too had a case. If it had not been for the forces of Great Britain on land and sea, America would have been wiped out long before the War for Independence. The demand that American citizens should contribute to the expenses which the Mother-Country was incurring in protecting herself and them was reasonable, and the refusal to pay anything at all was certainly not generous.

Our Colonies to-day contribute to Imperial Defence on precisely the grounds which the Americans refused to accept a hundred and fifty years ago. Nevertheless, our methods of obtaining these

contributions have changed since the time of George the Third.

One day Washington discussed what would be his fate at the hands of that monarch if he were captured.

For once, during a campaign in which he was never known to smile, his face seemed to relax as he said :

“ My neck does not feel as though it was made for a halter.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Washington met a country clergyman advancing towards him with bared head, and this conversation followed :

“ Put on your hat and I will shake hands with you.”

“ Not in the presence of one who has done so much for our country.”

“ You did just as much.”

“ No, no.”

“ We both did what we could.”

There came a day when Washington's patriotic fervour for the nation he was bringing to birth, and whose future he saw with strange prevision, was severely wounded—in a way that would have provided Napoleon with his greatest thrill of pleasure.

A German officer in his army made the suggestion that young America's growing pains would be ended if Washington would lay aside his United States citizenship and assume a crown !

Washington then showed that he was completely without self-interest.

Be assured, sir (he replied), that no occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the army . . . If I am not deceived in my

knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes were more disagreeable.

Let me conjure you, if you have any regard for your country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate as from yourself or anyone else, a sentiment of the like nature.

No Napoleon here. No upstart Emperor straddling across a continent and setting up a "chain-store" of kingdoms for his relations.

\* \* \* \* \*

Elizabeth Eggleston Seelye tells a story of Washington at a house in New Jersey where there was a wounded officer who was disturbed by the noise.

Washington was very careful to speak in an undertone at dinner, and to make no unnecessary sound. When he had gone into another room, however, his *aides* were not so thoughtful. Hearing them speaking in loud tones Washington became uneasy. He presently rose and re-entered the room, tiptoed across it, and, taking a book from the mantelpiece, went softly back. He had not said a word, but the young men took his hint and made no more noise.

Washington refused to smoke, but he was a capable planter and grew tobacco for profit. He drank wine, and when a teetotal guest asked to be excused taking a glass with him, the other guests thought their Commander-in-Chief had been insulted.

Washington protested. No guest need violate a principle at his table!

\* \* \* \* \*

Elected the first President of the United States, and re-elected for a second term, he polled each

time every vote on the electoral roll. And when the first ceremonial inaugural was held, and he was asked, "Do you solemnly swear that you will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States?" he reverently said:

"I do solemnly swear."

"And then," wrote Woodrow Wilson, "bending to kiss the Bible held before him, he bowed his head and said, 'So help me, God,' in tones no man could mistake, so deep was their thrill of feeling."

As he laid down his sword he said in farewell:

I consider it my indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to His holy keeping.

Washington went back to his beautiful home on Mount Vernon, overlooking the wide Potomac River, which flows downwards past his home from the capital which bears his name.

\* \* \* \* \*

He who had shown such fortitude in all dangers had no fear of his approaching end. Speaking of departed friends he said: "When I shall be called upon to follow them is known only to the Giver of Life. When the summons comes I shall endeavour to obey it with good grace."

He caught a chill, and on his death-bed sent for his two wills. "Preserve this one and burn the other," he said.

And to his physician, "Doctor, I die hard, but I am not afraid to go."

"'Tis well," said his wife. "I shall soon follow him."

During the day she had read to him from the Bible which stood on an armchair by his bed.

They lie together in the vault at the entrance to Mount Vernon. There his countrymen flock to do him reverence; often joined by visitors from Europe, and especially by Englishmen, who stand with bared heads, looking in through the open railings—regret and admiration blending in their thoughts.

\* \* \* \* \*

“It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God,” declared Washington. But he does not seem to have mentioned God very often in his writings, and the name of Christ does not occur at all. He once said that it was impossible to account for the creation of the universe without the agency of a Supreme Being, impossible to govern the universe without the aid of a Supreme Being, and impossible to reason without arriving at a Supreme Being.

Religion he thought was as necessary to reason as reason to religion. The one could not exist without the other. A rational being would lose his reason in attempting to account for the great phenomena of nature had he not a supreme Being to refer to; “and well has it been said that if there were no God, mankind would have been obliged to imagine one.”

He had been brought up in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and, says Lodge, to that church he always adhered, for its splendid liturgy and stately forms appealed to him and satisfied him. He loved it too as the church of his home and his childhood:

Yet he was as far as possible from being sectarian, and there is not a word of his which shows but the most entire liberality and toleration.

He made no parade of his religion, for in this, as in other things, he was perfectly simple and sincere. He was tortured by no doubts or questionings, but always believed in an overruling Providence, to whom he knelt and prayed in the day of darkness or in the hour of triumph with a supreme and childlike confidence.

Perhaps we may say of him what Dr. Johnson said of Milton, that he was "predisposed . . . to such unbounded freedom as can hardly consist with any established system of faith whatever."

\* \* \* \* \*

Though he left Christ out of his writings, he urged, in an Headquarters Order at Valley Forge, that "to the distinguished character of a patriot it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian."

And he obeyed Christ's rules; he surrendered ambition to patriotism; he gave his countrymen their independence in life and his well-treated slaves their liberty at his death.

To each new and ever-increasing generation of his own countrymen he left a legacy incomparably difficult—to be worthy of George Washington.

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Acknowledgments to: *George Washington*, by W. W. Thayer; *George Washington*, by Woodrow Wilson; *American Statesmen*, by Henry Cabot Lodge; *Washington*, by J. A. Harrison; *Life of Washington*, by Paulding; *Washington*, by Henry Cabot Lodge; *Story of Washington*, by Elizabeth Eggleston Seelye; *George Washington (Country Gentleman)*, by Paul Leland Harworth.





# LIVINGSTONE



## LIVINGSTONE

A brave man struggling in the storms of fate.

Pope.

I travelled among unknown men  
In lands beyond the sea.

Wordsworth.

ENTER Westminster Abbey any day, pass the group which is always gathered around the grave of the Unknown Warrior, and you may occasionally see a solitary negro kneeling in silent prayer at a well-known tomb in the centre of the nave.

His figure, sharply contrasted against the grey vastness of the interior, makes a fascinating study for an artist who would express something of what Africa meant to Livingstone, and what Livingstone will for ever mean to Africa.

There, inscribed on the marble slab below the kneeling African, is an epitome of what the great explorer did and sought to do for that Dark Continent of heathenism and slavery :

*All that I can add in my loneliness is, may Heaven's richest blessing come down on everyone, American, English or Turk, who will heal the open sore of the world.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Accompanied only by natives, Dr. Livingstone made his way—and not once only—into the heart of Africa, passing from ocean to ocean through territory in many cases occupied by hostile tribes.

Yet despite his many perils, he never fired a shot at his fellow-man. Once, when his party were attacked by slavers, shots were interchanged, but *he* did not fire, and he regretted the action of his companions. Many times it seemed that his life must be taken, but though he was constantly in danger, he continued his travels year after year until he died of sickness in the African forest.

No white man before his time, and none since, has understood the black man's nature as did Livingstone, or made himself so loved and trusted by alien races. By his rugged integrity, incredible courage, audacity and medical skill, his mighty spirit achieved a reputation which made him a tradition in Africa even during his own lifetime. Since his death, kinship or friendship with him has ever been an Open Sesame throughout the Dark Continent.

Even the slavers against whom he fought found it suited their dark purposes to claim his friendship. Yet more than once he released their slaves.

One of his maxims was to be scrupulously courteous at all times to all persons, white or coloured, and he was careful to be modest and upright because however objectionably the savages might behave, they were swift to recognise the difference between right and wrong, between one who only preached and one who both preached and practised.

Much of my influence (he said) I secured through a long course of tolerably good conduct.

No one ever gains much in this country without purity and uprightness. The acts of a stranger are keenly scrutinised by both young and old, and seldom is the judgment pronounced, even by the heathen, unfair.

I have heard women speaking in admiration of a white man because he was pure, and never was guilty of any secret immorality. Had he been they would have known it, and, untutored heathen though they be, would have despised him in consequence.

Secret vice becomes known throughout the tribe, and while one unacquainted with the language may imagine a peccadillo to be hidden, it is as patent to all as it would be in London had he a placard on his back.

\* \* \* \* \*

Livingstone ranks among the great moral influences of the nineteenth century. He has been likened to Moses and Isaiah; he has been called God's adventurer.

It is difficult to recall any other face in modern times which is characterised by such an expression of terrible earnestness.

In that rugged sombre brow there was not the faintest trace of weakness, or even of compromise. He had shrewd common-sense and indomitable courage. The shaggy wisp of hair that overhung his broad forehead left visible a well-shaped and noble-looking temple. But the mouth was almost savage in its imperiousness, the full nether lip was pressed forward by a decisive jaw, and the strong chin was not unlike that of "Fighting Buller" of South African fame. He looked more the explorer than the missionary.

Though he went to Africa as a preacher, he added to it the rôle of a pioneer, saying that his views of Christian duty were not so contracted as those "whose ideal is a dumpy sort of a man with a Bible under his arm. I have laboured in bricks and mortar, at the forge and carpenter's bench, as well as in preaching and medical practice.

"I feel that I am not my own. I am serving Christ when shooting a buffalo for my men or taking an astronomical observation, or writing to one of His children who forget, during the moment of penning a note, that charity which is eulogised as thinking no evil."

When he was a boy in Scotland his playmates noticed that he had determination. If they came to a rough part in their wanderings they would walk round while he strode through.

When he determined to cross Africa, friends attempted to dissuade him from what they thought was a vain-glorious but suicidal venture. He retorted that he was so greatly convinced that it was God's Will that he intended to go no matter who opposed him.

Contemptuous of personal toil or fatigue in pursuit of his mission, he was determined to discover what was hidden in the heart of Africa; its mountains, plains and rivers; its plants and animals, and, above all, its native races.

He was the first white man to discover Lake Nyasa and the other great lakes of the interior, and to behold "The Cataract of Sounding Smoke," those majestic falls which he hastened to name after Queen Victoria, and which are a wonder of the world.

In the early years of path-finding and discovery his nature was patient, sunny, and keen. Twenty to thirty attacks of African fever, so ruinous to health and temper, did for Livingstone what it invariably does to all who suffer from it. But even when subjected to the most galling hardships, he could bring himself to draw charming vignettes of the areas through which he was passing.

How often have I beheld, in still mornings, scenes the very essence of beauty, and all bathed in a quiet air of delicious warmth (he writes).

Green grass in meadows, the cattle feeding, the goats browsing, the kids skipping, the groups of herd boys with miniature bows, arrows and spears; the women wending their way to the rivers with watering pots poised jauntily on their heads; men sowing under the shady banyans; and old grey-headed fathers sitting on the ground . . . listening to the morning gossip; and all this flooded by the bright African sunshine, and the birds singing among the branches before the heat of the day has become intense.

These, he said, were pictures which he could never forget.

But these peaceful scenes did not endure. Entering the paths of the slave-raiders, he was asked, as the price of passage through new territory, to supply the chief with : "a man, an ox, or a gun."

Livingstone, believing that he had been divinely chosen to introduce Christianity and legitimate commerce to Africa, and that he would be protected until he had achieved that purpose, would never consent to giving up a man or be coerced into giving bigger presents than were fair and right. Nor would he accept any gift which was inconsistent with his dignity as the White Chief of a Black Expedition.

Never did he allow himself to be brow-beaten by a hostile chief, however large his following. One unfriendly tribe surrounded his little party, brandishing their spears. Livingstone showed no fear. He sat still and coolly claimed what no negro is capable of resisting—a palaver.

The hostile Chief sat opposite to him in the centre of the armed ring. Gradually a smaller circle was

formed within until the Chief saw that he was almost surrounded by Livingstone's men and that if his warriors caused trouble he would himself be seriously hurt. There was no conflict.

One day an old white-haired negro, who had heard from somewhere the text "Render unto Cæsar" put a difficult question :

You know that God has placed Chiefs among us whom we ought to support.

How is it that you who have a Book that tells you about Him do not come forward at once and pay this Chief tribute like anyone else ?

But Livingstone was in this difficulty, that the Chiefs had been spoiled by slavers who gave large presents to prevent their captives from being stolen in the night. His answer was a sophistry, but accepted as entirely reasonable.

"How," he asked, "could I know this was the Chief, for he had allowed me to remain near him for a day and a half without food ?"

When visitors arrive at a native village it is the custom of the Chief, if friendly, to send them in welcome a gift of food. The strangers send gifts in return.

\* \* \* \* \*

Livingstone preached the Gospel with fervour and sincerity. At the same time, he continued to make careful observations of everything he saw on his pioneering travels, so that anyone who followed him could be certain of the road—and also of friendly treatment.

Striving to make the everlasting mercy of God apparent to hostile and friendly natives, to slavers and their unhappy slaves, he proclaimed that the



everlasting love was shown by the Lord's death, that God forgives because He loves to forgive; that He works by smiles if possible, if not, by frowns; and that pain is only a means of enforcing love.

In beginning to speak on religious subjects with those who had never heard of Christianity, the great fact of the Son of God having come down from Heaven to die for us was the prominent theme. Livingstone declared that nothing was more vital than this. Christ Himself told us about His Father and the dwelling-place where He had gone. We had His words in the Book, and He really endured punishment in our stead from pure love. So if that failed to interest them, nothing else would succeed.

"Notwithstanding which," says the Rev. R. J. Campbell, "the teaching is plainly heretical. Neither the New Testament nor historic Christian doctrine inculcates that Christ was 'punished' for human sin, though He 'suffered' for it."

Heretical or otherwise, Livingstone's teaching changed men's lives.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the rainy season Livingstone went for days, weeks, and months, in pouring rain without shelter, always drenched, often unable even to light a fire at night as a protection against the wild beasts. Wet, cold, hungry, footsore, racked with African fever, only death could make him surrender his purpose.

He told his companions that they would never know how brave they were until they tried. Sometimes they refused to try, lost their way, their tempers, and their discipline.

Livingstone reached a small village on the banks of a narrow stream. He was too ill to go out of his tent. And there was mutiny because some of his party thought he had been partial in his gifts.

They were making a terrible din, and Livingstone, putting his head out of the tent, advised them to be quiet.

He was answered with an impudent laugh.

Though a preacher and a pacifist he believed in making a show of force in an emergency.

Knowing that discipline would be at an end if this mutiny were not quelled, and that our lives depended upon vigorously upholding authority, I seized a double-barrelled pistol and darted forth from the domicile, looking, I suppose, so savage as to put them to a precipitate flight.

As some remained within hearing, I told them that I must maintain discipline even though at the expense of some of their limbs . . . I was master . . . they became obedient, never afterwards gave me any trouble, or imagined that they had any right to my property.

Some of his guides threatened to desert and return to their tribe.

After using all my power of persuasion, I declared to them that . . . I would go on alone, and went into my little tent with the mind directed to Him Who hears the sighing of the soul.

He was soon followed by the head of his company, who protested :

“We will never leave you.”

The others said they were all his children and would die for him; they had not fought because he was against fighting; they had just spoken in the bitterness of their spirit, feeling that they could do nothing against their enemies. If an enemy

attacked, however, Livingstone would see what they could do in that direction.

But when they reached the coast at the end of the first tremendous journey, the natives in his party feared that, instead of honouring his promise to escort them back through Africa to their remote homes, he would sell them into slavery.

He told them that he would become a slave with them if they were taken.

By now he had become famous, and was offered a passage home on a British ship. He declined—to fulfil his promise to the natives.

\* \* \* \* \*

He was afraid of no man, white or coloured.

No wild beast of the forest and no reptile could frighten him. His *Journal* contains the classic story of his own capture by a lion which he discovered sitting on a boulder.

He fired both barrels and saw the beast's tail rise in anger from behind a bush. As he was moving again he heard a shout and, turning, saw the lion in the act of springing at him.

I was upon a little height. He caught my shoulder as he sprang, and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly against my ear, he shook me as a terrier does a rat.

The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first shake of the cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess, in which there was no sense of pain nor feeling of terror, though quite conscious of all that was happening.

It was like what patients partially under the influence of chloroform describe, who see all the operation but feel not the knife.

This singular condition was not the result of any

mental process. The shake annihilated fear and allowed no sense of horror in looking round at the beast. This peculiar state is probably produced in all animals killed by the carnivora; and if so is a merciful provision by our benevolent Creator for lessening the pain of death.

Turning round to relieve myself of the weight, as he had his paw on the back of my head, I saw his eyes directed to (a man) who was trying to shoot him at a distance of ten to fifteen yards. His gun, a flint one, misfired in both barrels; the lion immediately left me and bit his thigh.

Another man whose life I had saved . . . attempted to spear the lion. . . . He caught this man by the shoulder, but at that moment the bullets he had received took effect and he fell down dead. The whole was but the work of a few moments, and must have been his paroxysm of dying rage.

Once a lion stood near his camp-fire and roared at him all night. But Livingstone by this time regarded the King of Beasts with contempt, and refused to be disturbed.

Another experience was with a slave-boy who stole and ate some lemons, and then went to the river to wash his mouth so as to escape detection, but was doubly unfortunate. An alligator seized him and carried him to an island in the middle of the stream; there the boy grasped the reeds and baffled all the efforts of the reptile to dislodge him, till his companions, attracted by his cries, came to his assistance.

The alligator—a cowardly animal outside its element—at once let go its hold. The boy had many marks of teeth in his abdomen and thigh and of claws on his arms and legs.

\* \* \* \* \*

One of Livingstone's greatest difficulties arose from the little regard which the native chiefs had for their own people. Thus, after remonstrating with one of them because he sold his men into slavery, and telling him that there was a Judgment Day in prospect, the man said that when negroes died they did not go up to God, like white men, but remained buried in the ground.

During the latter years of his journeyings Livingstone was increasingly brought into contact with the sickening horrors of slavery. One of the most pathetic scenes he witnessed was that of a three-year-old boy who, realising he was to be parted from his mother, clung to her crying bitterly.

The child's feet were blistered and bleeding from being compelled to tramp long distances in a tropical sun. Yet the price asked for him was only four yards of cotton cloth!

He found dead women tied by the neck to trees and others lying in pools of blood in the forest paths, killed to frighten the rest of the party into going quicker.

Livingstone observed that the mortality among the slaves in transit was so high that, he estimated, not one in ten reached the coast alive.

Once he encountered a pathetic procession of six slaves singing as though they did not feel the weight and degradation of the slave-sticks which yoked them together. He asked the cause of their mirth, and was told they were rejoicing because they would come back after death, haunt and kill those who had sold them. The chorus of the song was the name of each one of the slave-dealers.

He writes :

The sights I have in this journey seen of slaving make my heart run cold, and I am not easily moved or very sentimental.

It is an awful traffic, and can only be congenial to devils.

If our statesmen stop the frightful waste of life in this region and mitigate the vast amount of human woe that accompanies it, they will do good on the large scale and cause joy in Heaven.

When he encountered a fresh tribe he would introduce himself as a man of peace who hated slavery.

Once as they passed through a negro village a cloud of arrows fell into his canoe. Immediately he jumped into the water and went ashore. With outstretched hands he announced that he came in peace ; and the natives became friendly at once.

He laid it down that most quarrels were caused by fear and misunderstanding. Yet he made it a rule never to interfere in native disputes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of the nude women were quite unembarrassed in his presence, but he records that a company of women who were being taken away as slaves hung their heads in shame at the sight of him.

He had trouble with Manenko, "a tall strapping woman of about twenty, distinguished by a profusion of ornaments and medicines hung round her; the latter are supposed to act as charms. Her body was smeared all over with a mixture of fat and red ochre, as a protection against the weather; a necessary precaution for, like most of the Bolanda ladies, she was otherwise in a state of frightful

nudity. This was not from want of clothing, for, being a Chief, she might have been as well clad as any of her subjects, but from her peculiar ideas of elegance in dress."

She proved herself a terrible scold :

Being on a low and disagreeable diet, I felt annoyed at this delay, and ordered the packages to be put into the canoes and to proceed up the river without her servants ; but Manenko, not to be circumvented in this way . . . seized the luggage and said she would carry it in spite of me.

My men succumbed to this "petticoat government" sooner than I felt inclined to do, and left me no power ; and, being unwilling to encounter her tongue, I was moving off to the canoes when she gave me a kind explanation, and, with her hand on my shoulder, gave me a motherly look, saying :

"Now, my little man, just do as the rest have done."

My feelings of annoyance, of course, vanished, and I went out to try and get some meat.

One chief asked him why Christianity had not been brought to his country sooner. Livingstone explained that communications were so difficult, but he prophesied that one day the whole world would be enlightened by the Gospel.

Pointing to the great Kalahar Desert, the Chief said : "You can never cross that country to the tribes beyond ; it is utterly impossible even for us black men, except in certain seasons when more than the usual supply of rain falls."

But the Chief himself assisted Livingstone in crossing that impassable desert.

Having himself embraced Christianity, the Chief of the Bak-wains thought that the best way to introduce the Gospel to his tribe was to flog them

all into a sound belief with a whip of rhinoceros hide. Livingstone taught him a better form of evangelism.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet when Livingstone had determined on a course, no expostulation availed. His native attendants implored him not to walk so fast, but in later life he would go on unheeding. Often his patience was tried to exasperation.

When a carrier went sick, the others would not assume his burden. Then he had to wait. He became irritable and impatient.

Determined at all costs to find a way into Nyasa without penetrating Portuguese territory, and so kill the slave traffic at its source, he drove his protesting party relentlessly forward. One of his helpers wrote despairingly :

The river gets no better . . . snags and shoals with tortuous windings. . . . Still there is no change in Livingstone's plans; he is for going on, regardless of the return. His determination seems to amount to infatuation. . . .

I can come to no other conclusion than that Dr. Livingstone is out of his mind. . . . He never thinks of getting back. All he cares for is accomplishing his object at any risk whatever. It is useless making any remark to him.

This same helper observes that when things begin to go wrong, it is well to give Livingstone a wide berth, especially when he sings to himself.

But the kind of air is some indication. If it is 'The Happy Land,' then look out for squalls. If 'Scots Wha Hae,' then there is some grand vision of discovery on his mind. . . . But on all occasions the humming of airs is a bad omen.



His natives say they always thought he had a heart, but now they believe he has none. Fearing trouble with Portugal, the Government recalled the expedition.

That was a blow. Rather than run the risk of his coastal steamer falling into the hands of the slavers, Livingstone, though he was no mariner, successfully steered her across the Indian Ocean into Bombay Harbour—an extraordinary feat.

\* \* \* \* \*

He undertakes a new expedition to find the source of the Nile, but every kind of misfortune now befalls him.

Sorrow upon sorrow is his portion. His wife dies and is buried in Africa. Some of his men leave him and he almost loses heart. He writes :

“I am heart-sore and sick of human blood.”

One day he witnesses a quarrel in a market place; it develops alarmingly and nearly 400 people are killed.

In a forest he stands looking at a little native grave and says that it is the kind of resting-place that he would prefer.

To lie in the still forest and no hand ever to disturb  
my bones . . . but I have nothing to do but wait till  
He Who is over all decides where I have to lay me  
down and die.

The slave raiders take pity on him and encourage him with their protection. He accepts their goodwill and continues to preach against their calling.

The constant rains weaken him; fever passes into pneumonia. Then the weather changes, and he has to be carried under the blistering tropical sun.

For eighty days he is stranded at one place, suffering this time from a choleric fever.

It is now that he reads his Bible through four times. He records that his life has been a calm, hopeful endeavour to do the work God has given him to do.

“The prospect of death in what I know to be right does not make me veer to one side or the other.”

More sorrows. When he reaches Ujiji, the half-caste custodian of his stores impudently tells him how by means of the Koran he has divined that Livingstone is dead, and so he has sold his master's beads and every yard of cloth, to invest them in ivory and slaves. But there is no money.

Young Livingstone might have behaved differently. The grey-haired explorer, realising that it is impossible to change the situation, calls the man a moral idiot, and turns away—a *beggar*!

His doubts as to the Divine ordering of this journey can be easily understood. Disappointments had been so continuous that he could not believe in the advent of a Good Samaritan. Whence could he come? Yet come he did, and at the moment of Livingstone's greatest despair and destitution.

\* \* \* \* \*

An American newspaper had commissioned Stanley to find Livingstone, and to spare no expense. For months the young explorer tracked the older through the African forests, until one evening his path opened into a clearing and he found a little party encamped.

Among them was a single white man, and

Stanley knew that his mission was ended. He advanced with outstretched hand :

"Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" he said.

It is the most superb recorded instance of the British phlegm.

Faith in his God-guided mission returned with the arrival of Stanley. But Livingstone refused the invitation to go back to the coast. No man alive should turn him into a "quitter." He had set out to find the source of the Nile, and he must find it. If, with God's help, he succeeded, he would then turn back and pray to be led safely home. But not until his work was done.

The journey has cost him untold toil, pain and travail. He is pale and pitifully weak. For the last ten days he has been bleeding from an artery—and it has taken all his strength.

Wearied, wearied (he cries). Oh, how I long to be permitted by the Over Power to finish my work! . . .

It is not all pleasure this exploration. No observation now owing to great weakness; I can scarcely hold a pencil.

A hut is prepared for him. He enters and kneels beside the bed. Presently his negro boy looks in and sees him still kneeling. An hour later he is still in the same position.

His pilgrimage is ended.

His native servants, Susi and Chuma, realise that a great man is dead.

"Why not bury him?" they are asked.

"Oh no; very big man; cannot bury here."

They buried his heart at Ilala, and after a rude embalment they carried their master's body all the way to the coast.

No gratitude was shown to them at the time by their master's white friends, though, with an intuitive sense of what was right, these negroes had performed a noble service to the nation.

\* \* \* \* \*

What were the last thoughts of David Livingstone as he knelt alone in his little hut at the end of his journey ?

That he thought he had failed is probable; for he had failed to find the source of the Nile. That he prayed for Africa, and that its horrors might be assuaged and its wounds healed by the Christian religion is certain; for he always prayed for Africa.

Yet much of what he strove to do in life was achieved by his death. When the news came it shook the world.

While British warships chased away the slavers, an army of Christian people from both hemispheres began to come out to seek the forest trails that Livingstone had blazed and to bring light and healing to thousands of negro villages in Central Africa.

Whatever the future may hold for the rest of the world, the great waking dream of Livingstone must be realised, for it is certain that heathen Africa will one day become a Christian continent.

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## CROMWELL



## CROMWELL

Paint me as I am.  
If you leave out the scars and wrinkles, I will not pay you  
a shilling.

*Oliver Cromwell.*

AFTER the most momentous day in its history, night had fallen upon the bare gloomy palace of Whitehall.

The vast crowds which gathered below the scaffold outside the great banqueting-hall that afternoon had seen the conclusion of a long and terrible fight between two champions of "divine right"—Cromwell, the uncouth man of iron, who claimed "divine leading" for the sovereignty of the people, and Charles Stuart, whose public execution that day had brought to an end in England an absolute monarchy based on "the divine right of kings."

Three days had elapsed between the sentence in Westminster Hall and the execution in Whitehall. They were spent by King Charles in seclusion, silence and meditation.

On the scaffold he bore himself with exquisite grace and manly dignity. He laid his head on the block, and himself gave the signal to the headsman, the common executioner, to do his duty.

The Royal head was struck off with a single blow of the axe.

And now the decapitated body of the dead King, shortly to be taken to Windsor, lies cold in his

coffin within the guarded palace; and there is none to do him reverence.

A muffled figure enters (says tradition), moves towards the coffin and lifts the lid. For a time he stands gazing at the dead figure.

"Cruel necessity," he mutters, and moves away.

The muffled figure was the most redoubtable of the regicides who signed the death-warrant—Oliver Cromwell.

Cruel necessity was at the heart of Cromwell's religion.

"Paint me as I am," he said to his artist. We shall try.

\* \* \* \* \*

No man in English history has been more execrated than Oliver Cromwell. Until recent times, when his statue was erected outside Westminster Hall in Parliament Square, the only monument to him in the country which he conquered and wisely governed was to be seen in Manchester. Even in our own time a First Lord of the Admiralty, ruler of the King's Navy, has found it impossible to give the name of Oliver Cromwell to a British warship.

The Royalists called him usurper.

Whereas a certain base mechanic fellow, by name Oliver Cromwell, has usurped our throne.

So ran the Royal proclamation.

The churchmen called him hypocrite; Ireland shuddered at his memory and called him "butcher," with good reason.

But his Ironsides loved him, Parliament obeyed him, and Europe respected and feared him. Claren-



don said that his greatness at home was but a shadow of his glory abroad.

He was always victorious by land and sea; for even if he was not present to conduct operations, he was represented by able supporters chosen by the sure instinct of a great man. The English stock has probably never produced an abler warrior-statesman, and certainly no stronger man than this Puritan with the physique of John Bull.

A gentleman farmer, with no war training, he became a master of this "rough and difficult art." Having slain his king because Charles would not surrender his royal prerogatives, Cromwell imposed his will on England for ten years; and then, in an age of hard temper, much blood-letting, plot and counter-plot, he achieved the most remarkable exploit of all by dying peacefully in his bed in Whitehall.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cromwell constantly quoted Scripture to justify his arbitrary conduct.

When remonstrating with Parliament or dissolving it, winning his victories or defending some new act of authority, he invariably spoke as though he were sure that God was on his side, pointing to past successes as proof of his contention.

And doubtless it is true that he was set aside for a special task—the limitation of an absolute monarchy represented by a king whom Cromwell's followers regarded as "the man of blood." If only Shakespeare had lived to have made a play of Charles and Cromwell! He would have brought out both sides of each character.

Yet Cromwell was in error in supposing that his

success in this world was of necessity a proof of Divine guidance. Worldly success has seldom been the lot of God's saints.

Of course the saints have never sought worldly success. Nor, on the other hand, it can be argued, did Cromwell. Rightly or wrongly he believed himself guided. But the end for which he worked was not worldly success.

It came to him in the course of his mission, which was successful, as that of all the saints has been. Only with most of them that success has not taken the form which it took with Cromwell.

Like King Charles, who was also sincerely religious after his manner, Cromwell ardently believed in Christianity. But his religion, and that of so many of his contemporaries, derived its inspiration rather from the Old Testament than the New.

The three countries forming the United Kingdom were to him the Promised Land for Puritan Protestantism; and he strode across their territories like a conquering Joshua.

In his young manhood he joined Hampden in resisting an earl's encroachments on the public commons of East Anglia; his first speech in Parliament was against a clergyman "tainted with Popery"; he was fiercely indignant against the Star Chamber methods of King Charles and Archbishop Laud and the persecution of unorthodox or dissenting Englishmen.

Prynne, the great opponent of the stage, had his ears cropped for libelling Laud; they were sewn on again. Sentenced by Star Chamber justice to be shorn once more, and branded too, his ears were

cropped so violently that part of his cheek was torn away; and the letters S and L were branded on either side of his face to mark him as a seditious libeller.

Sometimes a Star Chamber victim would not only lose his ears, but also have his tongue cut out and his thumbs taken off. Cromwell's hot blood boiled at these mutilations.

When asked to raise a troop of horse for the Parliamentary cause he brought with his Puritan conscience a military sagacity which has commended him to every great soldier since his time. Both Napoleon and Washington copied his methods.

In the opening days of the struggle Cromwell told Hampden that the Royalists were getting the better of them because the Parliamentary troops were a poor type. "Most of them are old decayed serving-men and tapsters and such kind of fellows. Do you think that the spirit of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen?"

With Puritan determination, he selected a finer type for his first little troop of horse; a company destined to provide some of the best leaders for that New Model Army which he was presently to train. He challenged the consciences of his little troop by warning them that they were to fight a Holy War for the service of God. At the same time, he declared that if he met Charles Stuart in battle he would have no hesitation in shooting him. That kept away men who had a literal fear of treason and its penalties.

Next he tested their courage.

Without warning, he deliberately led them into a

mock ambushade. Most of his hardy East Anglians proved their worth, but about twenty turned their backs.

Now he knew his men. He dismissed the run-aways, but invited them to leave their horses for the use of those who would "fight the Lord's battles in their stead." And as "the Lord's battles" had to be fought with the arm of flesh, he saw that his men were well equipped with sword, pike and gun.

Thus he was surrounded with a company of men who, like himself, held to the letter of the Bible, men who prayed frequently and fervently, and fought with unrestrained courage.

One of their earliest encounters, at Grantham, with Cavaliers outnumbering them by two to one, proved their military if not spiritual mettle. The Royalist horsemen were cut to pieces.

Cromwell's war-cry, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry," faith allied with efficiency, has become famous the whole world over. He made his troops feel that they were not as other men, but crusaders who had given themselves to God's cause in the spirit of sublime self-sacrifice.

On the march, in the camp, or in battle they must always behave as men of God. If any were caught stealing or looting, they were handed over to the enemy for punishment. If any man was heard to curse, he was fined a shilling; if found drunk, he was set in the stocks—or worse.

One of Cromwell's summary orders was :

"Hang the fellow out of hand and I am your warrant. For he shot a boy . . . by the spinney . . . the widow's son, her only support; so God and man must rejoice at his punishment."

Wherever his troops appeared they were welcomed by the populace, for they paid a fair price for all they required.

The Royalists levied and looted !

\* \* \* \* \*

*Cromwell was one of those rare beings who spend hours on the heights in solitary prayer, and who, when they do return to earth, come down endowed with a power which makes them invincible.*

Thus he could declare :

I do feel myself lifted up by a strange force. By night and by day I am urged forward on the great work. . . . Therefore shall I not fear what man shall do unto me.

I feel He giveth me the light to see the great darkness that surrounds us at noonday. . . . I seek daily (to know His will) and do nothing without first so seeking the Lord.

It is dangerous to obstruct such men in the performance of what they conclude to be their duty.

While other generals hesitated and debated, Cromwell, like Nelson after him, went sternly forward, trusting serenely in the inner light. He did not worry himself as to how he was going to fight a battle; he looked for inspiration to the hour of attack; and he was elated when another of his commanders received the same inspiration as himself. At Dunbar, the Scottish general, thinking that Cromwell's greatly inferior force was attempting to escape by sea, deployed his troops to cut them off from their ships.

"The Lord hath delivered them into our hands !" exclaimed Cromwell, as he and Lambert leapt simultaneously to the conclusion that this was the

moment to attack. "For," said Cromwell, "it pleased the Lord to set this apprehension upon both our hearts at the same instant."

Shouting their battle-cry, "The Lord of Hosts," they attacked the great army of the enemy.

Cromwell said that after an initial repulse "the enemy were made by the Lord of Hosts as stubble to our swords."

As the sun rose over the eastern ocean they broke in all directions. Above the noise of battle Oliver could be heard shouting :

"They run! They run! . . . Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered."

He collected his troops, steadied them, and called on them to sing the hundred and seventeenth Psalm. Let them praise the Lord, "for His magnificent kindness is great towards us."

\* \* \* \* \*

To their faith in God his men added an unwavering belief in Oliver Cromwell. Never did soldiers have a more intrepid or inspiring leader. Not once did he show a doubt that the Lord would win his battle. As he passed down the line, carrying his Bible and his sword, he would stir his men to a frenzy of religious determination. They would follow this invincible prophet of the Lord through blood and tumult, fire and tempest to triumph or annihilation.

Prince Rupert, who was to christen them Ironsides, asked a prisoner whether Cromwell was present and whether he would fight? If so, he should have fighting enough. The prisoner brought the message to Cromwell, who said grimly :

"If it please God, so shall he."

No sentence that Cromwell ever uttered was more revealing of the man.

At that battle of Marston Moor Cromwell snatched victory from disaster, and chased Rupert to the gates of York. The Royalists lost three or four thousand killed. "A victory of the Lord for the godly party," said Cromwell.

But he had presented his Master with a magnificent fighting instrument. It is recognised that his Ironsides were the finest body of troops England has ever produced; the finest military machine since the Roman legions.

At Naseby his army was larger, but it was not to numbers that he ascribed the victory :

I can say this, that when I saw the enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men . . . I could not . . . but smile out to God in praises in assurance of victory, because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are, of which I had great assurance —*and God did it.*

Soon afterwards he was at Long Sutton watching some of his "military saints" attacking Goring's army, three times their number, which they cut to pieces. Of this feat, one of the bravest in history, he wrote exultantly :

Thus you have Long Sutton mercy added to Naseby mercy.

And to see this, *is it not to see the face of God?*

These words may sound blasphemous, but to Cromwell they were but a natural expression of faith and gratitude.

The defeated royalists ridiculed his hypocrisy and raged against him. We may perhaps pardon

them. It is difficult for the loser to believe that his winning opponent is God's chosen servant. Those who make that claim must expect contemptuous incredulity, for they are sure to get it.

This was the fate of certain Hebrew prophets when they spoke for the Lord of Hosts.

Some prophets gave a sign. The only sign that Cromwell could give was the sign of triumph; but for his own side this was enough, though they may have forgotten that might is not always right, whether exercised by crown or commune.

But when Cromwell, striding into the King's presence, seized papers proving Royal duplicity, and threatened to cut off Charles' head with the crown on it, there were some of his supporters who doubted his Divine guidance. True, Elizabeth had removed the head of Mary Queen of Scots, but Elizabeth then was a queen. For a subject to execute his sovereign—in England that was unprecedented.

Yet when the crisis became more acute and it was the King's head or Cromwell's, England lost her king.

Nevertheless, under the new *régime* men found it almost as dangerous to criticise their new ruler as it had been to say a word against Charles or Laud in the days of the hated Star Chamber.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Cromwell went to Ireland to quell the Royalist rising among Catholics, though he still wrote as if God were with him, his merciless behaviour would suggest that his familiar spirit came to him from the bottomless pit.

He sent to the Speaker a cold-blooded description of the storming of Drogheda :



Indeed, being in the heat of action I forbade to spare any that were in arms in that town; and I think that night they put to the sword about two thousand men.

Nearly a thousand of them, fleeing for safety, were put to the sword in St. Peter's Church.

"Ten friars were knocked on the head," reports Cromwell, with evident satisfaction.

His enemies accused him of slaughtering men, women and children indiscriminately, but that charge cannot be sustained, though when blood-lust and fanaticism combine in the heat of battle anything may happen whatever orders have been given.

Certainly a massacre took place. But Cromwell declared that his orders had only been to refuse quarter to anyone bearing arms. "It was set upon some of our hearts," said he, "that a great thing should be done, not by power or might, but by the Spirit of God." Had he studied his Bible with the same sagacity that he studied the arts of war, he might have decided that what God required of him was—in justice to remember mercy.

At Wexford, home of the privateers, who harried the Parliament shipping, there was again wholesale slaughter. About fifteen hundred perished, many being driven into the water and drowned.

There is excuse but not justification for Cromwell's behaviour in Ireland. It was customary in those times to give no quarter to a captured city which had refused to surrender. He was fighting as a Protestant against Catholics, and he had in mind the comparatively recent fires of Smithfield and the more recent massacre of Protestant settlers

in Ireland. Moreover, he regarded the Irish as no better than rebels.

He rightly believed that severity at the outset would prevent a long-drawn-out war and further bloodshed. When he appeared before Dundalk, he recounted what had happened in Drogheda and said :

“ If you, being warned thereby, shall surrender your garrison to the use of the Parliament of England . . . you may thereby prevent effusion of blood.”

Dundalk surrendered. Cromwell's ruthlessness had worked some benefit.

We get a better insight into his religion when we watch him quelling a mutiny in England than when in Ireland we see him executing “ the righteous judgment of God upon those barbarous wretches who have imbued their hands in so much innocent blood.”

He was magnificent in subduing a riot among his own men.

At Burford he had the ringleaders drawn out for execution, and not until three of them had been shot did he stay his hand. Then he entered the pulpit and poured forth “ such a homily that with tears and groans the mutinous troopers returned to duty.”

\* \* \* \* \*

In war Cromwell had always kept a clear head; he had to do the same in the peace that followed Worcester, on account of the irreconcilable differences between Royalists who wanted to place Charles the Second on the throne and those who would have proclaimed Christ as King of England,

with themselves, His saints, holding the principal positions.

Though his addresses to Parliament were plentifully sprinkled with texts, he was generally impatient of delays and obstruction. At any moment he was capable of facing each new danger as it came and of dealing with it "in the name of the Lord."

His enemies routed, the victor of Worcester, Naseby, Dunbar and Marston Moor had quietly returned to London to take part in the Council of State. That he had then no Napoleonic intentions was apparent, for at this hour of triumph he could have given them expression.

His assumption of dictatorial power was the fault of Parliament, which drove him thereto by proposing that his post of General-in-Chief be abolished. Cromwell was not the man to take that sort of treatment like a Puritan lamb.

He placed his men at the doors of the House of Commons and striding up and down stormed against the members for continuing to cling to power—as he at that moment intended to do. He told the astounded assembly that they were no longer a Parliament. But when the Speaker said that he would not leave the chair unless he was forced, Cromwell, never behindhand with that commodity, told his lieutenant to supply the required assistance—which was done!

Again Cromwell claimed Divine sanctions for his conduct! This was his order:

Mr. Speaker, leave your place!

Return all of you to your homes, because the Lord has opened to us the path of power, which will be useful to Him and the world.

On the next day one of his soldiers ironically wrote on the door of Parliament :

Empty. House to Let.

Clearly the army was well pleased with its Chief, and London seemed undisturbed. Only the staid Parliamentarians were annoyed; but both they and their successors were to have further experiences of this form of treatment during the years to come, until the time came when Cromwell, true to form, dismissed his last Parliament with the defiant phrase :

And let God judge between thee and me.

Meanwhile he had become Lord Protector of the three kingdoms, and he was on the point of accepting the crown as King Oliver the First when a petition against such a course signed by some of his own officers gave him what seems to have been his only repulse. His lonely position had become so perilous that it was probably rather self-protection than vainglory which made him dally with the offer of the crown.

He did not say, as did Washington, that nothing which had occurred during his struggle for the country had given him such great offence.

But in refusing the title he did say that the laws may still be executed as justly without such a title as with it. . . . "And truly I may say that almost universal obedience hath been given by all ranks and sorts of men to the Protectorate." He did not think there had ever been a more ready obedience to laws. And he pointed out that he accepted his rôle of Lord Protector not so much with a hope of doing good as from a desire to prevent mischief and evil—

imminent evil." And so likening himself to a good constable, set to keep the peace of the parish, he gave his decision :

*I judge for myself there is no necessity for this name of King.*

With great pomp he was proclaimed Lord Protector—for Life. The Speaker placed on his shoulders a mantle of purple velvet lined with ermine, girt him with the sword, and handed him the sceptre. Thus did he take his seat in the Royal Coronation Chair of Scotland, which had been specially brought from the Abbey for that purpose.

Yet though the Puritan John Bull had been virtually enthroned he afterwards declared :

I can say in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth, that I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, and to have kept a flock of sheep rather than undertake such a government as this.

He was, indeed, Sovereign in all but name. He even signed himself after the fashion of royalty—Oliver P. But his signature would have been just as effectively honoured had he abbreviated it further and made it O. C. or reversed it to C. O.

He had a splendid dream—the union of the Protestant churches of the world under the Protectorate of London. This was nobler than Napoleon's of a united Europe with Paris as its capital and himself as its Emperor-Dictator.

Cromwell acted with commendable promptitude in the terrible case of the Waldensians, subjects of the Duke of Savoy, who was prompted by the Inquisition to unspeakable acts of cruelty against them.

Children were snatched from their parents and

dashed against the rocks; their bleeding limbs were used to belabour their mothers; men and women were bound, with their heads between their knees, and rolled down a precipice !

Cromwell ordered a naval demonstration at Savona, a port of Savoy, and after long discussions the much-persecuted peasants were allowed to live in peace in their own valleys. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

To the very end of his life he continued to be vividly conscious of the supernatural. And he also continued to do arbitrary and daring actions, just as he did at the opening of the war, when, because of a refusal to pay taxes to Parliament, he shut up on a cold night in March, and without food or firing, the Vice-Chancellor and other dignitaries of his own University of Cambridge.

Nevertheless, Cromwell was a man of integrity and moral fibre, and the very antithesis of the Merry Monarch who came after him. He declared that his aim was first, to be an honest man; second, to serve God and His people; and third, to fulfil his duty to the Commonwealth. He was stern and strangely passionate. He was amazingly quick to act. He would order, argue, harangue, preach, and even implore. But, for all his strength, he preferred to win the heart rather than to overawe it.

Essentially he was no sour fanatic, though he vainly strove to raise men above the moral standards to which human nature is generally accustomed. He stopped horse-racing and he closed theatres, not because he was against pleasure but because he was against the moral corruption with which these were associated in his generation. Yet he was a

sound judge of a horse. He would smoke and laugh and play when freed from cares of state, and he may claim to have invented the week-end habit. But that was because he dared not risk those long summer progresses into the country, so popular with his royal predecessors.

"The mind is the man," was one of his sayings. "If that be kept pure, the man signifies somewhat." If not, he would like to know what difference there was between him and the beast? Only, he thought, the opportunity to do more mischief. He urged his followers to count it "a shame to see men bold in sin and profaneness; and God will bless you."

"Subtlety may deceive you; integrity never will," was one of his sayings, and another: "A few honest men are better than numbers."

His conduct towards women was chivalrous and dignified. Writing from Dunbar, he tells his wife that he is sorry he has had so little time for letters. And he chides her because in so many of her own she had urged him to remember her and her children. He says laconically:

"Thou art dearer to me than any other creature; let that suffice."

He tells her that he is conscious of many corruptions in his nature, and bids her pray for him, that his sins be taken away.

After Marston Moor the wife of a Lancashire squire sought her husband's body among the four thousand dead upon the battlefield. The corpses were being stripped and buried. A general asked her what she was about, listened with tenderness, and begged her to leave, as the scene was so terrible. He then called a trooper and set her upon a horse.

Departing, she inquired the name of the friendly officer, and was told that it was General Cromwell.

He showed kindness to the Presbyterian Divines in Edinburgh, though he had routed their army at Dunbar. The pulpits were empty when Cromwell arrived in the capital. True to his custom, he sought to fill them, inviting the ministers back and offering them freedom to preach their own doctrines.

When his offer was declined, the services were conducted by his own chaplains and even by some of his troopers.

This shocked the Presbyterian Divines, who objected to such a usurpation of their calling. But Cromwell caustically inquired if it troubled them that Christ was preached, and asked where in Scripture they found that preaching was exclusively their function ?

"I hope," he said, "that He who ascended up on High may give His gifts to whom He pleases."

\* \* \* \* \*

When George Fox, the Quaker, came to talk to Oliver about the persecutions of the Friends, he saw there was a change in the appearance of the Lord Protector. His end was near. "Before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his Lifeguard, I saw a waft of death go forth against him; and when I came to him he looked a dead man."

The ague had weakened him. On his death-bed he seemed to be apprehensive. He murmured : "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." And again : "Tell me, is it possible to fall from grace ?"

"No, it is not possible," replied the minister, upholding the error of his sect.



"Then," said the dying Cromwell, "I am safe, for I know that once I was in grace."

Perhaps his mind had gone back to his careless youth, from which religion had drawn him away. He prayed :

Lord . . . I am in a covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will come to Thee, for Thy people.

Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however Thou may dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. . . . Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments to depend on Thyself.

Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. . . . And give us a good night if it be Thy pleasure.

Towards the end he was seized with joy, peace and confidence.

The Lord hath filled me with as much assurance of His pardon and His love as my soul can hold. . . . I love God, or rather am beloved by God.

To the last he has confidence that he is God's chosen instrument, and is ready to serve Him again. "But my work is done. God will be with His people. . . . God is good."

They offer him a potion to soothe him into sleep, but he says that his desire is neither to drink nor sleep, but "to make what haste I can to be gone."

\* \* \* \* \*

That week a tremendous storm raged in London, uprooting great trees near his dwelling in St. James'

Park. The same thing happened in St. Helena at the passing of Napoleon. His enemies saw in it a sign of the wrath of God.

On the Wednesday he ventured to prophesy the time of his end. "It will be on Friday," he said.

Perhaps it was in his mind that Friday, September 3, was the anniversary of his two decisive victories—Worcester and Dunbar.

Friday came and he surrendered.

To Cromwell it was again :

"*The day of the Lord.*"

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DARWIN



## DARWIN

There will be no . . . true science without religion.

*Charles Kingsley.*

MEET—the shade of Charles Darwin !  
A tall, pensive, elderly figure; round-shouldered, ruddy-featured, benevolent.

He has a long white beard; in summer he wears a straw hat; in winter one of soft black felt and a short cloak.

If you meet him inside his old home, he may be wearing a white shawl over his stooping shoulders.

He has been dead these fifty years, but, says tradition, he still lives and visits his old home at Downe, a lost English village not twenty miles from London.

Silently he roams the old haunts, engaged on his mysterious and endless quest.

But if you should come upon him at any hour of the day or night, do not be alarmed. He is harmless and friendly, though he was himself more violently attacked than any other man of his generation.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some regarded Darwin as a re-incarnation of Socrates. Others recognised in his appearance the ape from which he claimed that we all descended.

Darwin's physique was powerful, his gestures were awkward, and he became very bald. Beneath an over-arching and sagacious brow were keen deep-set eyes of bluish-grey: piercing, intelligent, infinitely patient.

He was a kindly and exceedingly gentle scientist—indeed, the greatest England has produced. His work is a landmark in human thought. All scientific theory is either pre-Darwinian or post-Darwinian.

He had to endure a tornado of hostility from the Christian churches. Yet, with the ready consent of the Dean, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, where his body now lies within a few feet of that other famous English scientist, Sir Isaac Newton.

The Abbey has its orators and ministers who have convinced senates and swayed nations. Not one of them all (said the *Times*) has wielded a power over men and their intelligences more complete than that which . . . has emanated from the simple country house in Kent.

Memories of Poets breathe about the mighty church. Science invokes the aid of the imagination no less than poetry. Darwin as he searched imagined.

Every microscopic fact his patient eyes unearthed, his fancy caught up and set in its proper niche in a fabric as stately and grand as ever the creative company of Poets' Corner wove from sunbeams and rainbows.

\* \* \* \* \*

In more than one respect Darwin was a very lucky man.

He was born of parents whose families on both sides possessed a strongly scientific bent. He was sent to Cambridge, where there were good scientific teachers, instead of to Oxford, where there were scarcely any in his time.

He was comfortably off. Not too rich, he was independent, and thus able to work quietly without worrying about a profession.

As a boy he was a keen collector. He collected

anything from stones, shells and flowers to franked envelopes. Doubtless he would have collected stamps if any had been in existence.

His nature was sweet and amiable. Though he had to say things which wounded those who heard them, it was never his intention to hurt any living creature.

His love for everything alive was reciprocated, for the animal kingdom took to him as a friend. He could attract almost any dog from its master. His own dog Polly was so attached to him that she would mope about the house at the slightest indication of his departure.

Darwin declared that sympathy for animals is a trait which only developed very late in the history of mankind, and that to the Gauchos of the Pampas the very thought of it appeared surprising.

Certainly it was strongly developed in him. One of the things which most troubled his conscience was that as a boy he had beaten a puppy—though he does not seem to have hurt it much. And when he killed a cross-beak with a stone, he was so ashamed that he could not bring himself to refer to the incident until many years later. It is strange that a man who was so sensitive to suffering should have caused such bitter controversy as he was to arouse.

His love for his children and his despair at the loss of "our poor child Anne" remind one of Dickens' story of the death of Little Nell.

Her dear face (wrote Darwin) now rises before me as she used sometimes to come running downstairs with a stolen pinch of snuff for me : her whole form radiant with the pleasure of giving pleasure.

Even when playing with her cousins, when her joyousness almost passed into boisterousness, a single glance of my eye, not of displeasure (for I thank God I hardly ever cast one on her), but of want of sympathy, would for some minutes alter her whole countenance.

In the last short illness, her conduct, in simple truth, was angelic. She never once complained, never became fretful, was ever considerate of others, and thankful in the most gentle pathetic manner for everything done for her.

When so exhausted that she could hardly speak, she praised everything that was given her, and said some tea "was beautifully good," and these, I believe, were the last precious words ever addressed by her dear lips to me.

How passionately he was attached to his home life! How poignant was the anguish of his soul as he exclaimed:

We have lost the joy of our household and the solace of our old age. She must have known how we loved her.

Oh, that she could know how deeply, how tenderly, we do still and shall ever love her dear joyous face! Blessings on her.

This cry of the heart was wrung from him when he had ceased to believe what he had once believed, the words of Him Who said "Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

He seems never to have spoken an angry word to his children, for his son, Sir Francis Darwin, says of him:

I well remember one occasion when my father reproved me for a piece of carelessness; and I can still recall the feeling of depression which came over me and the care which he took to disperse it by speaking to me soon afterwards with special kindness.



His patience with his family was reflected in his conduct towards his servants, who seldom left him. He addressed them with unvarying politeness, using the expression "Would you be so good?" when he wished to ask for anything.

His son describes how an outdoor man named Brooks "was accused . . . of using foul language, and was hailed before my father to be judged. I as a little boy standing in the hall heard my father say : 'You know you are a very bad-tempered man !' 'Yessir' (in a tone of deep depression). 'Then get out of the room—you ought to be ashamed of yourself.' At this point I rushed upstairs in vague alarm and heard no more."

\* \* \* \* \*

One of his sayings which showed a natural kindness of heart was "I would not be a Tory, if it was merely on account of their cold hearts about that scandal to Christian nations—Slavery."

For in South America he had seen slavery in practice, and had recoiled in horror. There had been a quarrel aboard the *Beagle* with Captain FitzRoy upon this very question. The captain had defended and praised slavery, telling Darwin that he had just visited a slave-owner, who had called up many slaves and asked them if they were happy and whether they wished to be free, and they had all answered "No."

Darwin records that he asked the captain, perhaps with a touch of sarcasm, whether he thought that such a reply given in the presence of their master was worth anything. At which the captain had become excessively angry, and had said that, as Darwin doubted his word, they could no longer

live together. . . . But after a few hours he had calmed down and apologised.

It was with the greatest relief that Darwin left slave-ridden South America, though it was there that he collected the material which became the basis for the world-shaking theories contained in the *Origin of Species*.

He writes in his Autobiography :

I thank God I shall never again visit a slave country. To this day if I hear a distant scream it recalls with painful vividness my feelings when, passing a house near Pernambuco, I heard the most pitiable moans, and could not but suspect that some poor slave was being tortured; yet knew that I was as powerless as a child, even to remonstrate. . . .

I suspected that these moans were from a tortured slave, for I was told that this was the case in another instance.

Near Rio de Janeiro I lived opposite to an old lady who kept screws to crush the fingers of her female slaves. I have stayed in a house where a young mulatto daily and hourly was reviled, beaten and persecuted enough to break the spirit of the lowest animal.

I have seen a little boy six or seven years old struck thrice with a horse-whip on his naked head (before I could interfere), for having handed me a glass of water not quite clean; I saw his father tremble at a mere glance from his master's eye.

I will not even allude to the heart-sickening atrocities which I authentically heard of; nor would I have mentioned the above revolting details had I not met with several people so blinded by the constitutional gaiety of the negro as to speak of slavery as a tolerable evil.

Darwin said that it was impossible to see a negro and not feel kindly disposed towards him—"such

cheerful, open, honest expressions, such fine muscular bodies." Those who sympathised with the slave-holder and had no thought for the slave seemed incapable of putting themselves in the place of the latter.

What a cheerless prospect, with not even a hope of change! Picture to yourself the chance ever hanging over you of your wife and your little children—those objects which nature urges even the slave to call his own—being torn from you and sold like beasts to the first bidder. And those deeds are done and palliated by men who profess to love their neighbours as themselves, and who believe in God and pray that His will be done on earth.

\* \* \* \* \*

From the foregoing, and from his long and patient search after truth, one would assume that by nature Darwin was strictly truthful; but as a boy, like many another who became celebrated, he told lies, generally, as is so often the case with children, to cause a sensation.

Once he gathered a quantity of valuable fruit from his father's garden, secreted it and rushed indoors to announce that he had discovered a hoard of stolen fruit.

His father winked at these aberrations, but a friend of Darwin's youth gave him an odd lesson in honesty. He told him that some worthy had left a large sum of money for tradesmen to provide the boys of Shrewsbury with free cakes, on the single condition that they entered a shop wearing an old hat cocked at an angle.

Believing this, young Darwin entered a pastry-cook's shop with his hat cocked and ordered some cakes. Leaving without paying, and chased by the

shopkeeper, he dropped his prize in a fright. The friend received him with derisive laughter.

\* \* \* \* \*

The father of the scientist—described by Darwin as “the wisest man I knew”—was a physician, and hoped that his son would follow the same calling. He was greatly disappointed at Charles’ backwardness. He told his son: “You care for nothing but dogs, shooting and rat-catching. You will be a disgrace to yourself and all the family.”

Undoubtedly Darwin was a “late-starter,” and as a child he showed no promise. But his father’s prophecy, so signally unfulfilled, deserves to be recorded as a warning to parents.

When Dr. Darwin saw that his son had no leaning towards medicine, he advised him to take orders.

Considering how fiercely I have been attacked by the orthodox (wrote Darwin), it seems ludicrous that I once intended to be a clergyman. . . . I asked for some time to consider, as from what little I had heard or thought on the subject, I had scruples in declaring my belief in all the dogmas of the Church of England, though otherwise I liked the thought of becoming a country clergyman.

He read with great care the old favourite of orthodoxy, *Pearson on the Creed*, and a few other books on theology; and as he did not then have the least doubt of the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible, he found no difficulty in accepting the Creed as well.

The intention of taking orders was never formally given up; it died when Darwin left Cambridge and became naturalist to the *Beagle*

expedition, the venture which was to lay the foundations of his future greatness.

According to the phrenologists, wrote Darwin, he was well-fitted to become a clergyman, for one of them had said that he had the bump of reverence sufficiently developed for ten priests !

It was not, however, his bump of reverence, but his astounding theory of the variations of species, that was to engage the public attention and make him everywhere the centre of public discussion.

In a sense evolution was, of course, no new theory. It is an obvious fact of human experience that all things start from humble beginnings. But what was the principle behind this evolution ? Was it mind—the mind of God ?

The great French naturalist, Buffon, had attributed it almost entirely to environment. The animal was obliged to adapt itself to its environment or perish. Buffon's compatriot, Lamarck, developed a similar theory in greater detail, and it is interesting to note that it bears a strong resemblance to the views of Charles' grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, though there is no direct evidence that Lamarck was acquainted with his writings.

But their theories differed from his own in one most important particular. His predecessors had all accepted an evolution of a sort : but it was only an evolution within the species ; whereas in his theory of evolution Darwin contended that species actually evolved from one another.

But he went further than this. He introduced a new and as he believed an all-sufficient principle to account for this evolution, and this principle was Natural Selection, which he represented as

blindly selecting those fortuitous variations in any species which would ensure the survival of the fittest.

That mankind had evolved from the highest anthropoid apes might at first appear shocking to those who had been brought up to regard themselves as descended from the Divinely-created Adam and Eve. But there was something in Darwin's theory which was much more alarming than this. In his scheme the transformation of species—say from ape to man—was effected by a purely mechanical action, into which mind did not enter at any point.

And from such a prospect the whole outside world recoiled. For it was utterly to eliminate God from the great drama of Creation. There are still to-day scientists who maintain an wholly mechanistic view of life. But they no longer base their conclusions upon Darwin's theory, and the fate of the doctrine of Natural Selection at least suggests that no explanation of the universe that leaves Mind out of account is likely to hold the field for any length of time.

But in criticising Darwin's influence we must carefully distinguish between his doctrine of evolution and his theory of Natural Selection as the cause of that evolution.

"I look on it," he wrote, "as absolutely certain that much in the 'Origin' will be proved rubbish, but I expect and hope that the framework will stand."

And what he foretold has come to pass. Were he to return to the scientific world of to-day, he would certainly not attach to Natural Selection the importance which he attributed to it in his lifetime.

But he would have the satisfaction of discovering that evolution, the framework of his doctrine, so far from having been killed by ridicule, was securely established. The Darwinian habit of mind which thinks of everything in terms of simple beginnings holds the field in all branches of science.

New advances have indeed been made to new standpoints. Nevertheless, the mechanical interpretation of the world has been very largely abandoned; for it is recognised to-day that there are factors which evade every scientific calculation, and at least suggest the activity of some Will operating in the Universe (as it operated in the Garden of Eden); of which the wayfaring man, though a fool, has always been well aware.

\* \* \* \* \*

Darwin's first book contained nothing which appeared to conflict with religious belief, but when his *Descent of Man*, the natural sequel, was published, with its claim that man too was the outcome of Natural Selection, and not the product of a special Divine Creation, then there was trouble ahead.

I am aware (he said) that the conclusions arrived at in this book will be denounced by some as highly irreligious; but he who denounces them is bound to show why it is more irreligious to explain the origin of man as a distinct species by descent from some lower form than to explain the birth of the individual through the laws of ordinary reproduction.

He declared that whoever had seen a savage in his native land would not feel much shame if he were forced to acknowledge that the blood of some more humble creature flowed in his veins. For his own part, he would as soon be descended from that

heroic little monkey who braved his dreaded enemy in order to save the life of his keeper, or from that old baboon who carried his young comrade away in triumph from a crowd of astonished dogs, as from a savage who delighted to torture his enemies, offered up bloody sacrifices, treated his wives like slaves, practised infanticide, knew no decency, and was haunted by the grossest superstitions.

\* \* \* \* \*

He found himself attacked from every quarter. He had outraged the Christian world by expressing views (albeit supported by a mass of evidence) contrary to the revelation of God in the Scripture.

His theories were debated at the British Association meeting in Oxford, and the Bishop of the diocese (Wilberforce), with charming impudence, asked "Darwin's bull-dog," Professor Huxley, from which branch of his own family he derived his peculiar ancestry? Was he descended from an ape on the side of his grandfather or his grandmother?

As was expected, the sally caused amusement.

But it gave Huxley the chance for which he was waiting. Blandly he told the Bishop that he felt no shame in having risen from such an origin; but he should feel it a shame to have sprung from one who prostituted the gifts of culture and eloquence to the service of prejudice and falsehood.

If I am asked whether I should choose to be descended from the poor animal of low intelligence and stooping gait who grins and chatters as we pass, or from a man endowed with great ability and splendid position who should use these gifts to discredit humble seekers after truth—I hesitate what answer I should make.

\* \* \* \* \*



And so the battle raged on, centred around a man who was a pure scientist and one of the clearest of thinkers.

No scientist before him had ever supported a new theory with such a mass of carefully-sifted and seemingly incontrovertible evidence.

He had bided his time. After years of patient labour he had given his discoveries to the world just at the moment when the general intellectual atmosphere of the age was ready to receive them.

The *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, and within a few months it had made Darwin the most famous scientist in Europe, and the centre of the greatest scientific controversy that has ever arisen.

Yet he never could bring himself to believe that he was a great man. His relations with his scientific contemporaries all bear witness to his modesty and candour.

The reviewer who discovered that "I," "me," and "my" occurred no less than forty times in the first few paragraphs of *Origin of Species* doubtless concluded that he had to deal with a colossal egotist. But few men have been less egotistical than Darwin.

He was, he maintained, an inquirer like themselves—though perhaps more fortunate. Biology was his last, and he stuck to it like a good cobbler. The possible application of his theories to religion did not concern him very much. Truth was truth. It could hurt neither God nor man.

He was no controversialist outside his own field, and indeed he hated controversy altogether as a great waste of time, which it often is.

He was persuaded that men of science and re-

ligion worked on different planes ; and that scientists should leave the whole question of religion alone.

His object was simply to collect such data as would establish his theory of evolution. He was not therefore concerned with what we may call the philosophy of evolution, its application to other departments of knowledge and human experience—for example, theology—and he had not the slightest wish to be drawn into an attack upon religion.

But, to put it quite bluntly, his theory of evolution seemed to many to contain a complete answer to the riddle of the universe, and to render religion entirely unnecessary. Little realising the extent to which Darwinism was going to be modified in the course of the next half-century, the scientists of the time became rather above themselves, claiming that all knowledge but their own was out of date, and that they alone had access to the truth.

Yet Darwin himself was never so presumptuous, and our own generation has seen a most definite reaction from his position, though it would not be true to-day to say that scientists are more Christian.

\* \* \* \* \*

However much his friends or opponents might bluster, Darwin remained courteous, but unmoved.

As to the theological view of the question, he said :

That is always painful to me. I am bewildered. I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to be too much misery in the world.

I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and Omnipotent God would have designedly created the

Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed.

On the other hand, I cannot be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion at all satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton.

Let each man hope and believe what he can. . . . My views are not at all necessarily atheistical. The lightning kills a man whether a good one or a bad one, owing to the excessively complex action of natural laws. A child (who may turn out to be an idiot) is born by the action of even more complex laws. And I can see no reason why a man or other animal may not have been aboriginally produced by other laws, and that all these laws may have been expressly designed by an Omniscient Creator who foresaw every event and consequence. But the more I think, the more bewildered I become.

Darwin met Tennyson at Farringford, and the Poet Laureate asked :

“Does your theory of evolution make against Christianity ?”

“Certainly not,” said Darwin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though he had once thought of being a clergyman, the religious instinct was never very strong in him. Yet he thought much about religion during his voyage in the *Beagle*.

In his Autobiography he says :

I was quite orthodox, and I remember being heartily laughed at by some of the officers (though themselves orthodox) for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality.

I supposed that it was the novelty of the argument that amused them. But I had gradually come to see that the Old Testament was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos.

The question then continually rose in my mind and would not be banished. Is it credible that if God were now to make a revelation to the Hindoos, He would permit it to be connected with the belief in Vishnu, Siva, etc., as Christianity is connected with the Old Testament? This appeared to me to be incredible.

Darwin may have found it incredible, but, assuming that God thought it necessary to make a further revelation, it was but natural that the manifestation of Himself in Christ should be the fulfilment of the earlier aspirations of men. Surely the older beliefs, however crudely expressed and understood, had been a partial revelation of His being?

Had Darwin studied the life of Joseph, one of the finest characters in the Old Testament, or the life and Psalms of King David, he would have found many convincing reasons why Christ should have allied Himself with the Old Testament.

Nor would Darwin accept the miraculous, for the scientific mind refuses to accept as provable anything that is not of this world. He argued that the clearest evidence would be necessary to make any sane man believe in the miracles by which Christianity is supported; that the more we know of the fixed laws of nature, the more incredible do miracles

become; and that the men in those first days were ignorant and credulous to a degree which has become almost incomprehensible.

He further argued that the Gospels could not be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events which they describe, that they differed in details which were far too important, as it seemed to him, to be regarded as the normal divergencies of eye-witnesses.

By such reflections as these, which I give not as having the least novelty or value, but as they influenced me, I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation. The fact that many false religions had spread over large portions of the earth like wildfire had some weight with me.

The world through its wisdom knew not God.  
Poor lovable Darwin !

\* \* \* \* \*

There were tests of Christianity, truly scientific, which he does not seem to have tried—at least, not with the same patient insistence that he exercised so commendably in his other inquiries.

Christianity says bluntly that he who seeketh findeth, and to him who knocketh it shall be opened. If Darwin had sought in prayer the proofs of Christianity, he would have found them as every seeker has done, since he who seeks always finds the way leading unto life. And the spirit of the risen Christ would most surely have witnessed with his spirit and corroborated the truth of Christianity which had escaped the grasp of his powerful mind.

Had he been a persistent seeker after spiritual truth, instead of discovering the ape in man, he

would have discovered the Kingdom of God in himself, and perhaps, while extending that Kingdom, have become the outstanding saint of modern times.

But Darwin was very unwilling to give up his early belief in Christianity :

I feel sure of this, for I can remember often and often inventing day-dreams of old letters between distinguished Romans, and MSS. being discovered at Pompeii or elsewhere, which confirmed all that was written in the Gospels.

But I have found it more and more difficult with free scope given to the imagination to invent evidence which would suffice to convince me.

And so, unconscious of the work and witness in the world of the Holy Spirit, he descended into a dreary scepticism and writes :

Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress.

\* \* \* \* \*

He became very reticent on the subject of religion, holding the view that such a matter was private to the individual. Yet in 1879 he wrote to a Mr. Fordyce :

What my own views may be is a question of no consequence to anyone but myself. But, as you ask, I may state that my judgment often fluctuates. . . . In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. I think that generally (and more and more as I grow older), but not always, that an agnostic would be the most correct description of the state of my mind.

To an inquisitive German student he wrote

saying that the theory of evolution was quite compatible with the belief in a God; but that he must remember that different persons have different definitions of what they mean by God. This did not satisfy the student, and he asked for further enlightenment, as his religious beliefs had been shaken by Darwin's theories.

But Darwin replied that he was now an old man in delicate health, and that he had not the time to answer these questions fully, even assuming that they were capable of being answered. Science and Christianity, said Darwin, had nothing to do with each other, except in so far as the habit of scientific investigation made a man cautious about accepting proofs. As far as he was concerned, he did not believe that any revelation had ever been made as to a future life; everyone must draw his own conclusions from vague and contradictory evidence.

Six years earlier he had told a Dutch correspondent that the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe, with our conscious selves, arose through chance seemed to him the chief argument for the existence of God; but whether this was an argument of real value he had never been able to decide.

He knew that if we admitted a First Cause, the mind still craved to know whence it came and how it arose. Nor could he overlook the difficulty caused by the immense amount of suffering throughout the world.

He was prepared to defer to a certain extent to the judgment of the many able men who had believed in God; but here again he saw how poor an argu-

ment this was. It therefore seemed to him that the safest conclusion was that the whole subject was beyond the scope of man's intellect.

"But man," he added, "can do his duty."

The highest stage in moral culture at which man could arrive was, he once said, when he recognised that he ought to control his thoughts. Whatever made a bad action familiar to the mind rendered its performance so much the easier.

\* \* \* \* \*

Darwin's case offers conclusive testimony that it is possible by over-concentration in a single direction to lose the faculty of knowing about God and the things of the spirit. For though he had a great imagination, and one of the finest intellects this country has produced, his mind took a certain turn, and some of his faculties suffered atrophy during the long studies of twenty or thirty years.

Up to the age of thirty or thereabouts he had derived great pleasure from poetry, and especially from the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley. As a schoolboy he had taken an immense delight in the works of Shakespeare, and particularly in his historical plays. Pictures and music had enchanted him. But as time passed by he discovered that he could not endure to read a line of poetry. He tried to return to Shakespeare, but he then found him so intolerably dull that he was nauseated!

In the same way he lost his taste for music and pictures, though he retained his love for fine scenery. Even this did not cause him the exquisite delight which it had once done. But novels, which he regarded as works of the imagination, though



not of a very high order, were for years a wonderful relief and pleasure to him.

"A novel, according to my taste," he said, "does not come in the first class unless it contains some person whom one can thoroughly love, and if a pretty woman, all the better."

And so he then reflects that :

this curious and lamentable loss of the higher æsthetic taste is all the odder as the books on history, biographies, travels and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a machine for grinding general laws out of a large collection of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the highest states depend I cannot conceive.

But when making this remarkable admission, which probably goes far to explain the loss of his religion, his old humility reasserts itself.

A man with a mind more highly organised or better constituted would not, I suppose, have thus suffered; and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry and listen to some music at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of the brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use.

The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature.

Here unquestionably lies the secret of Darwin's scepticism. With all his scientific observation, he had not learned that worship exercises the highest part of the faculties of man, and his neglect of religion had ended in the drying up of that part of his nature which had once given him a sense of sublimity.

Similarly his neglect of poetry and music had killed the appeal which they had once made to him.

One of Darwin's friends, the Duke of Argyll, has recorded an incident which bears on this circumstance. As the two talked together, the Duke instanced the wonderful contrivances of nature as probable expressions of Mind behind the Universe; and he said afterwards that he would never forget Darwin's answer :

He looked at me very hard and said, "Well, that often comes to me with overwhelming force. But at other times——" and he shook his head, vaguely adding, "it seems to go away."

There had been a time, Darwin confesses, when the thought of the eye, so marvellously adapted to its end, had made him feel cold all over . . . was the Universe, after all, as mindless as he had supposed ?

But his belief in Natural Selection, reasserting itself, drove such a conjecture from his mind, though he still had to admit that "the sight of a feather in a peacock's tail whenever I gaze at it makes me sick."

Yet he could also say :

After standing in the midst of the grandeur of a Brazilian forest, it is not possible to give an adequate idea of the feelings of wonder and admiration and devotion which fill and elevate the mind.

I well remember my conviction that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body, but now the grandest scenes would not cause any such convictions to rise in my mind.

It may be truly said that I am like a man who has become colour-blind.

Thus did Darwin continue to amass scientific data to the last, and as book succeeded book his reputation steadily grew. He had become the greatest scientist in Europe.

Yet there was one near to him who remained unimpressed by this immense prestige. A guest at Downe remarked to Darwin's gardener that his master seemed far from well.

"Yes, sir," was the reply, "but he would have much better health if only he had something to do."

For forty years Darwin was a constant sufferer from abdominal troubles, which he bore with meekness and resignation. Towards the end his heart began to weaken, and he said quietly :

"I am not afraid to die."

Already he had recorded in his Autobiography his belief that he had acted rightly in devoting his life to science :

I feel no remorse from having committed any great sin, but have often regretted that I have not done more direct good to my fellow-creatures.

If there is more faith in honest doubt, as Tennyson affirmed, then Darwin might be called a man of Faith; for no one can doubt his honesty. He tried to believe and failed to believe, because he tried the wrong way.

But he was an honest doubter.

For him work had been the solé pleasure of life. "It is so much more interesting to observe than to write."

Rarely was he able to leave his home; attendance at any formal ceremony was painful and irksome to him, though he would make an occasional public

appearance, as he did at Downe Church in 1871 at the wedding of his daughter. When he attended the funeral of his brother Erasmus, he seemed absorbed in a sad reverie.

He preferred to wander daily around the Sand-Walk, out to the little wood and back again to his garden. It was his custom to transfer a few stones each day from one place to another, taking one stone on each outward journey and dropping it into the new heap.

When all the stones had been moved in this way, he knew that his day's exercise was over. Thus he had taken his regulation number of rounds without troubling to count the journeys, leaving his mind free to ponder the weightier things of science.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though local tradition says that his aged and ghostly figure may still be observed pacing the Sand-Walk, still seeking for further links in the chain of man's descent from the chattering ape, I have never yet encountered him. And I have visited his old home and played many a round of golf over the fields where he used to wander in pensive meditation.

But the other day I met a lady who resided for years in the house where Darwin lived and died. I asked her if rumour spoke truly when it said that she had seen the shade of Darwin?

My question startled her. Yes, it was true, but she did not like talking about that experience. I urged her to tell, and she admitted that one evening when she was entertaining friends she was going into the scullery from the kitchen when, thinking

of nothing in particular, she saw Darwin standing motionless before her !

His figure was in profile and quite clear, but it remained there for only an instant.

As she looked in amazement at the silent stooping form and searching eyes, he vanished—leaving her alone in the passage.

Feeling very unnerved, she hurried back to join her friends.

That was her only experience of the ghost of Darwin. He had died in his bedroom upstairs, but she had not seen any sign of him in any other part of the house.

Did this lady see the shade of Darwin, or just a projection of her own subconscious thoughts ?

Does the venerable form of the gentle agnostic still haunt his old home ? If so, what is he seeking ?

Or is he no longer one of the seekers, because he has joined the ranks of those who have already found ? and, if so, has he now something new to tell us ; something which did not come to him until too late for his *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* ?

What is Darwin's amazing new discovery ?

Is it that elusive missing link that unites men with monkeys, or the golden cord that joins men with God ?

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Acknowledgments to : *Darwin's Autobiography*; *Life of Darwin*, by G. T. Bettany; *Charles Darwin*, by Francis Darwin; *Church and People*, by Carpenter; *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, by Francis Darwin; *Darwin*, by R. W. G. Hingston.



## SHAKESPEARE





## SHAKESPEARE

He seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through nature at one glance.

*Pope.*

**S**HALL we ever find for one who has been extolled to the "floor of heaven" a name more fitting than that left us by Ben Jonson :

Gentle Will ?

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !  
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears ; soft stillness, and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

He is the myriad-minded man, possessed perhaps of the greatest intelligence ever conferred on mortal being, the Supreme Poet of our literature, to whose serene and translucent intellect the world bears continual testimony.

His breadth, power of utterance and grandeur gain additional lustre as we draw further away from those great days of the Elizabethans.

But to his contemporaries he was "Gentle Will," and though in our own day someone may have even written a book to prove that he was the Messiah, "Gentle Will" he shall be to us.

Listen to him :

The moon shines bright : In such a night as this  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise ; in such a night  
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

On such a night as this when "the moonlight sleeps upon this bank" does Gentle Will have Lorenzo say immortally :

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;  
There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed Cherubims :  
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;  
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

\* \* \* \*

It is a pity that we do not know as much of Shakespeare as we do of Burns, who came nearest to him in art and genius ; and perhaps in character !

Both were lovers of the countryside, both were gay and ready for any fun and adventure.

Shakespeare, roaming the Warwickshire woods and glades with rare ardour, and keen and observant eye, like Burns on the bonny banks of Ayr, " would have studied every bud, blossom, leaf, insect or butterfly ; fished freely and hunted surreptitiously."

His locks were of chestnut hue. In *As You Like It* we find : " Your chestnut hair was ever the only colour." And Furnivall says of Shakespeare :

I see a lithe and active fellow, with ruddy cheeks, hazel eyes, and auburn hair . . . full of life . . . impulsive, inquiring, sympathetic ; up to any fun and daring, into scrapes and out of them with a laugh ; making love to all the girls ; a favourite wherever he goes—even with the prigs and fools that he mocks ;—untroubled as yet with Hamlet doubts ; but in many a quiet time communing with the beauty of the earth and sky around him, with the thoughts of men of old

in books; throwing himself with all his heart into all that he does.

No doubt he tickled trout in the broad Avon; certainly he learned the selling points of a horse, knowledge which he was later to show in *Venus and Adonis*; and he knew something of catching hares as well. He may have been poaching free venison to stock his father's butcher's shop when he fell into that scrape with Sir Thomas Lucy, who made things so unpleasant for him that he had to leave Stratford, and, like many another before and since, take perforce the flood-tide which led to fame and fortune.

He may have gone to London with a company of play-actors who had been visiting Stratford; and perhaps he held horses' heads outside the theatre in Shoreditch, as tradition affirms: penniless poets in disgrace have done worse things than that.

But he soon managed to find a footing on the rush-strewn boards, and he began forthwith "to turn a line as cleverly as any other of the rapsallion geniuses who at that time subsisted sparsely on the histrionic fringes of vagabondage."

Shakespeare had left behind him his wife Anne (whom he had married, also perforce, when he was eighteen and she was twenty-six) and his three children, Susanna and the twins, Hamnet and Judith; he had left behind also his father, once the bailiff or mayor of the town, but now sinking into debt, and imprisoned for same, like Dickens' Mr. Micawber, though presently to be raised to the dignity of "gentleman," by his successful son.

At Stratford Shakespeare probably studied law, and he certainly acquired there a knowledge of

Latin. Some have thought that he was intended for Holy Orders, a dangerous profession in the days when men might be tortured and burnt to death for their religion, but his inclinations were probably rather towards a coat-of-arms than a martyr's crown.

His appearance among the play-actors, and the content of his works, do not suggest that he had at this time a more strongly developed religious sense than the average Englishman.

But he was honest, kindly, and a merry fellow. And he had a spiritual quality which comes out in his portraits perhaps more noticeably than in his works.

Of no author (than of the Bard of Avon) have so many reputedly original oil-portraits been brought to light. Yet the only authentic portraits are the Droeshout engraving prefixed to the First Folio edition of his works in 1623, and the limestone bust placed over his tomb in Stratford-on-Avon Church by his friends shortly after his death. They agree in the open-eyed serenity of the countenance, the sensitiveness of the mouth, the well-rounded jaw indicating a solidity of character, and, more especially, in the massive dome which suggests spiritual wisdom of a high degree.

Two of the most remarkable heads that ever sat on human shoulders were owned by Shakespeare and by Socrates, the Athenian philosopher and moralist.

Socrates was among the wisest men of the ancient world, just as is Shakespeare of the modern world; and their heads have much in common; the upper lobes of each are abnormally developed; whilst

the *frontal sinus*, which gives that striking prominence to the brow of the acute observer, is practically imperceptible in both foreheads.

In other words, the perceptive and reflective qualities of these giants are so equally well-developed that the line of the forehead rises in each case perpendicularly. Shakespeare's moderately arching eyebrows give the impression that he is one, as he would put it, whose customary outlook upon the world is as if beholding :

. . . a most majestic vision, and harmonious charmingly.

\* \* \* \* \*

What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

Thus, through the mouth of Hamlet, does Shakespeare most perfectly express the spirit of that great movement which we call the Renaissance into which he was born.

When the Roman Empire fell before the onrush of the Barbarians, its place was taken by the Catholic Church, which became the directing force of Europe for a thousand years. But in time this great Church-State civilisation, with its achievements and failures, began to be found too narrow for the growing consciousness of man.

The revival of ancient studies, the invention of printing, the discovery of America, all contributed to so immense an outburst of activity that the Renaissance has been called "the discovery of man and of the world."

In the past there had been a tendency to under-

value human achievement and to regard this world as no more than a place of preparation for the next. It is indeed a place of preparation, but man has a destiny to achieve on earth as well as a spiritual goal to achieve hereafter. Preparation for the next world is best achieved by true self-fulfilment in this, which does not preclude obedience to the command: "Love not the world, neither the things of the world."

Now that humanity was given a new valuation, human activities suddenly assumed an extraordinary importance. Men decided to be up and doing, rather than passively to wait before authority. It was, in fact, discovered that "the proper study of mankind is man."

Such was the age into which the greatest dramatist of all time was born.

\* \* \* \* \*

Side by side with the Renaissance, and indeed closely connected with it, was another great movement, which we call the Reformation. Almost one-half of Europe had withdrawn from its allegiance to the Church of Rome, and this had led to a succession of "wars of religion," which had divided the states of Europe into two hostile camps.

But although these struggles were to continue upon the Continent long after Shakespeare's death, it is important to remember that by the time he had reached manhood, the religious problem, so far as England was concerned, had been solved—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, patched up—by the Elizabethan settlement.

The more intelligent men of Shakespeare's generation were therefore inclined to leave controversial

religious issues severely alone, and to allow the over-boiled pot to simmer down. In following their example, Shakespeare represents the mind of the Renaissance more fully than does the Puritan Milton in the next generation.

In Milton's *Paradise Lost* God is the centre of the whole world order. But Shakespeare is more immediately concerned with man and the whole range of human activities. Both standpoints are legitimate, provided they are not abused. For God is in man and man in God.

Shakespeare towered above his contemporaries. But he remained none the less a child of his age, and that age was still an age of faith. His plays gave him abundant opportunity for attacking religion if he wanted to, and had he been an atheist, he would never have resisted the temptation. What we find, on the contrary, is a man who, though unwilling outwardly to identify himself with a specific creed, is invariably sympathetic towards any religious position which is sincerely held.

This, of course, is in no way inconsistent with his perfectly true observation that

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie  
Which we ascribe to Heaven,

or with his jests at "young Charbon the Puritan and old Paysam the Papist"; or with his irreverent protest against the conversion of the Jews on the ground that this would lead to a rise in the price of bacon; or finally with his bitter remark in the *Merchant of Venice*:

In religion  
What damned error but some sober brow  
Will bless it and approve it with a text?

Catholics have claimed him as their own, but it is a claim which cannot be allowed. Certainly he seems to identify himself with King John's defiant attitude towards the Papacy, at least in so far as its claims to temporal power are concerned.

The Papal Legate, sent to call the King to account for refusing his nominee admission to the See of Canterbury and for stealing its revenues, is bluntly told :

Thou canst not, Cardinal, devise a name  
So slight, unworthy and ridiculous  
To charge me to an answer as the Pope.

And although we know that John was cruel and wicked, a despicable royal villain, we feel that Shakespeare is behind him when he makes the King continue :

Tell him this tale ; and from the mouth of England  
Add thus much more—that no Italian priest  
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions.  
But as we under Heaven are supreme head  
So under Him that great supremacy  
Where we do reign, we will alone uphold  
Without the assistance of a mortal hand.

Shakespeare, through John, is here voicing the attitude of the ordinary Englishman of his time, for it was common knowledge that in bygone days the Papacy had not been unwilling to take advantage of a weak monarch. So there is a relish and a sting in King John's last two lines :

So tell the Pope, all reverence set apart  
To him, and his usurp'd authority.

It is most unlikely that Shakespeare's sympathies were with the Catholics, and it is noteworthy that



he makes Cranmer prophesy at the baptism of Queen Elizabeth :

In her days every man shall eat in safety  
God shall truly be known. . . .

He could scarcely have written thus had he been a Catholic at heart. At the same time, he was quite ready to introduce into his plays kindly studies of Catholic religious, as, for example, Friar Lawrence, whom he treats as a simple-minded monk, and whose sincerity he never calls in question.

So again it is a hermit in *As You Like It* who is instrumental in converting the usurping Duke :

Both from his enterprise and from the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Actors rarely achieve fame for piety, and Shakespeare never enters into the feelings of the specifically religious type as he does into the mind and heart of the lover or the murderer. Perhaps he had more personal experience of love and murder.

He was less interested in shades of conduct than in moral consequences. His sinners are not reclaimed, but caught in the deepest depth of their sin, in the sorrows and pains of an inflexible Divine law, which Shakespeare does not trouble to prove is nevertheless the law of love. Inevitably the hour comes when the vices and crimes of his characters stand before them as grisly spectres, "bare and naked, trembling at themselves." Yet :

Even through the hollow eye of death I spy life peering.

Certainly there is nothing to suggest that Shakespeare was concerned, as were Milton, Bunyan and Cromwell, to discover whether he was eternally lost or saved by works or faith.

There is moral intention in some of his later plays, but not a single specifically religious feature. All through his works men seem to do good or ill simply of a natural inclination thereto; they do not fear future punishment or look for supernatural reward.

Man is at the centre of the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

No one has ever given such a remarkable example of the human mind in action as Shakespeare in *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V*, or displayed a keener sense of the tragic end of human ambition than he did in *Macbeth* and *Henry VIII*.

But tragedy for Shakespeare does not mean simply a sad event, as it has come to do for the popular Press. Rather it is a fine impulse which in the end is corrupted by one that is bad, or something within the hero which hinders his self-realisation, as in the case of Hamlet, who has a perfectly straightforward task—to avenge his father's death, but who constantly vacillates until in the end justice is done at the expense of a great deal of misery to quite innocent people.

Again, in *Macbeth*, we see a man in a great position which he owes partly to his bravery and partly to his reputation for loyalty. He dies a murderer who has broken the most solemn ties of hospitality and right dealing. Macbeth was at heart a fine character; but he yielded to evil, and was betrayed by it.

For in Shakespeare's tragedies lives are ruined by forces which are outside our control; we are the creatures of circumstance, which plays sport with us all, for although man is a "wonderful piece of work," yet he is incomplete, "an uncrowned king."

It would be well if we could now say that Shakespeare held God to be the final answer to the un-

resolved strivings and aspirations of man. But whilst it must be frankly admitted that he nowhere explicitly says this, we are not, however, justified in assuming, as some have done, that he did not believe it to be true. For, in spite of his reticence, we do find a very large number of cases of sympathy with the point of view which is genuinely religious.

If, says Plumptre, there is any preacher who by his constant warnings would deter us "from sin and crime by the self-punishment which they bring, and the tortures which sooner or later they inflict upon the human conscience, it is Shakespeare":

I am alone, the villain of the earth  
And feel I am so most!

Wolsey in despair declaims against the "Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye!" And "Oh, how wretched is that poor man that hangs on princes' favours!"

And when he falls he falls like Lucifer  
Never to hope again  
Oh, Cromwell! Cromwell!  
Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my king, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies!

\* \* \* \* \*

Shakespeare's wonderful human sympathy is with us in all his plays. The puppet may be a fool, but he shall eat. To this as much as to anything else he owes his greatness. It is a quality that, abounding in Jesus of Nazareth, has often been forgotten by His followers. Stressing the human sympathy of Shakespeare, George Siebel says the essence of all Shakespearean criticism might be concentrated in the sonnet *To My Bookbinder* which ends:

But nothing else were fit to case him in  
Bind up Will Shakespeare in a *human skin*.

There is nothing gloomy, narrow or ascetic about him, though he is dealing all the time with the greatest problems of human life.

"I believe this to be one of Shakespeare's most wondrous qualities—the humanity of his nature and heart," writes Stopford Brooke. "There is a spirit of sunny endeavour about him and an acquiescence in things as they are—not incompatible with the cheerful resolve to make them better, which I trust will be good for your mind."

He is to an extraordinary degree the poet of the lover. No one ever described love scenes more charmingly.

Wherever possible he avoids illicit or criminal passion. His lovers address each other or the chaste stars with light-hearted freedom. They stand before us as creations of incomparable loveliness.

The Shakespearean norm of love, says Mr. Herford, is "a passion kindling the heart, brain and senses alike in natural and happy proportions, ardent but not sensual, pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affections elsewhere."

"Speak low, if you speak love," he counsels; "Love whose month is ever May," "With love's light wings did I o'er perch these walls"; "Love is a spirit all compact of fire."

Love goes toward love as schoolboys from their books,  
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

"No sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another

the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy; and in those degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage."

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast !  
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest !

"What's in a name ? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek

And more in *Romeo and Juliet* about "This bud of love," the sudden lightning, the beauteous flower, love as "deep as the boundless sea"; "swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon; That monthly changes in her circled orb":

How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,  
Like softest music to attending ears.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Grindon, who states the woman's point of view, notices that the meeting of Antony and Cleopatra in middle age brought with it a rapture of intoxication, of very youth itself; and as the steel would leap to the magnet so did this one great personality leap to the other:

Such responsiveness is rarely to be found; and after spending an hour with each other what a dull vegetable-like aspect the rest of the world would present ! . . . They played together as children might; and if the world were all play they might have played together until the end of time; neither could ever tire of the other. But the world has a straight line of duty, particularly for those in high places, and from that straight line they fell; and there is no recovery for either.

Then death comes at the right moment. There is an exultation in us as we witness it—as we realise

what they have escaped—and we can join Cleopatra in saying Death shall be proud to take them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Much has been written to prove that Shakespeare had a profound knowledge of Holy Writ, and it has become a commonplace to say that the works of no other author contain so much which is exalted and ennobling. His writings have been called the Lay Bible. In the dramas alone there are over eighty passages of the type which we associate with Scripture. Nothing more divinely inspired in the whole range of secular literature can be found than the glowing appeal for clemency toward Antonio, made by Portia to Shylock :

The quality of mercy is not strained,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

It is an attribute to God Himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.

Not only does he never allow any of his characters to mock at religion, but he always approaches the subject of Christ, the Christian life and Christian conduct with a spirit of sympathy and reverence :

. . . In those Holy fields  
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet  
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd  
For our advantage on the bitter Cross.

And here is the doctrine of the Atonement :

Alas ! Alas !  
Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;  
And He that might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy.

Judas appears and reappears in *Richard II*:  
 "Three Judases, each one thrice worse than  
 Judas":

Did they not sometime cry "all hail" to me?  
 So Judas did to Christ, but he, in twelve,  
 Found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none.

We are told that "Comfort's in heaven, and we on the earth where nothing was but crosses, cares and grief;" "my comfort is that heaven will take our souls;" "there's a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow;" that "this lies all within the will of God to whom I do appeal;" "my soul shall wait on thee in heaven;" and although "'Tis a vile thing to die, When men are unprepar'd and look not for it" that:

To sue to live, I find I seek to die  
 And seeking death find life.

We find in *Henry VI*, "Now God be praised that to believing souls Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair"—and in *Henry V*—and Henry is probably Shakespeare's favourite, for he is the true Englishman—

. . . O God, Thy arm was here  
 And not to us, but to Thy arm alone  
 Ascribe we all.

Modern novelists and film scenario writers might improve both the theology and the morals of their writings by learning this from *Measure for Measure*:

Better it were a brother died at once  
 Than that a sister by redeeming him  
 Should die for ever.

Reverence for God's creatures is a sign of reverence for God. Darwin thought that kindness to animals was one of the last moral lessons that men learn. Yet Gentle Will has in him an unmistak-

able vein of kindness for animals as well as for human beings. For whilst he objects to the cruelty that loads a falling man, and says that "'Tis not enough to hold the feeble up But to support him after," he tells in *As You Like It*, the story of :

A poor sequestered stag,  
That from the hunters' aim had ta'en a hurt  
Did come to languish.

The wretched animal heav'd forth such groans  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase.

\* \* \* \* \*

Of all man's pleasures music does him least harm and most good. When Elisha called for the minstrel, the hand of God came upon him. When David played before Saul, the evil spirit went out of him. Music is a divine instrument which God has often used to bring people into the Kingdom of Heaven. Shakespeare says :

The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus :  
Let no such man be trusted.

Instead of emphasising that revenge is sweet, Shakespeare says there is no valour in revenge, and that virtue is rarer than vengeance. He warns us against entering a quarrel, against slander, whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue out-venoms all the worms of Nile, against idleness, which, missing the tide, leaves all our life bound in shallows and miseries.

And he is eloquent against "lean-faced envy,"



“back-wounding calumny,” the “vaulting ambition that o’er leaps itself,” “tiger-footed rage,” “jealousy—the green-eyed monster,” “ingratitude, the marble-hearted fiend,” which in children is “sharper than a serpent’s tooth,” “avarice, the ambitious foul infirmity that grows with such pernicious root,” “deceitfulness which to betray doth wear an angel’s face to seize with eagle’s talons,” duplicity that “can smile and smile and be a villain,” and “hypocrisy” that with devotion’s visage and pious action can “sugar o’er the devil himself.”

We feel that he would have us all :

Take each man’s censure; but reserve judgment,  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend;  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

In fact, says Plumptre, there is “scarcely a single crime, vice, sin, folly that he has not helped to make more hateful, more odious, more repugnant . . . by the language that he has used in holding them up to scorn and execration.” He never calls evil good nor good evil; nor does he ever try to make the worse appear the better cause.

He treats prayer with respect, though there is nothing in his works to show that he believes that our prayers are answered. Yet he does not think there is anything unmanly in prayer, nor does he take it to be a mark of a weak character. Othello, in the presence of the Duke and senators, does not disdain to say :

. . . truly as to heaven  
I do confess the vices of my blood.

And in *Measure for Measure* the Duke, disguised as a friar, declares :

I am come to advise you, comfort you, pray with you.

Hamlet finds the usurping King praying, and is about to avenge his father's death, but reflects that his enemy is now :

. . . in the purging of his soul

The would-be avenger will await a more suitable time "when he is fit and seasoned for his passage" :  
when he is

. . . about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in't.

Then he will trip him,

. . . that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damned and black  
As hell, whereto it goes.

There is much in the entire play of *Hamlet* to suggest that it was conceived and written during a period when Shakespeare himself was discovering in his own experience that there were "more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

When the conscience-stricken king is oppressed, the poet himself is perhaps in the background, sitting upon his own stool of repentance, as in remorse he pens the lines about his offence which smells to Heaven :

And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardoned being down ? . . .  
May one be pardoned and retain the offence ?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
. . . but 't is not so above.

Yet, however lofty his sentiments, or however noble his aspirations, his moral speculations and religious insight never reach far beyond Hamlet's soliloquy :

The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns.

And though we find him brooding upon the future state, he never shows any real grasp of the "other-worldly," for he was not a mystic.

He rarely if ever ventures to depict the ecstatic joys of Paradise. And although to him the visible world was such an inexhaustible source of wonder and beauty, and human life so ennobled with love and sympathy, ebullient with youthful energy seeking a worthy outlet amid scenes of "pomp and circumstance," his characteristic attitude towards the Unseen remains that of doubt, horror, and dismay. And so the condemned Claudio exclaims :

"Death is a fearful thing ! "

To which the proud chaste Isabella retorts :

"And shamed life a hateful."

But Claudio can only reiterate :

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where ;

To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,  
And blown with restless violence round about  
The pendant world.

Phrases such as these are indeed used by characters to express their own habit of mind ; yet who can doubt but that they are pointers to Shakespeare's own secret views ? He would not be obtrusive with his beliefs, and he may have thought it was neither the time nor the place to express himself more clearly.

He probably took God so much for granted that he never dreamt of questioning His existence or the truth of the Christian creed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The answers which scholars have given to the question, "Why does not Shakespeare tell us more?" have varied very greatly, and have in a large degree been coloured by the private opinions of the critics. Thus, while some have claimed him to be a free-thinker in the agnostic sense of the term, others have held that he upholds all the values of Christianity. But Shakespeare had indeed the mind of the humanist, and humanism, though it by no means excludes a belief in Christianity, has always in it a tendency to centre its interest upon this world, or as Protagoras, the Greek philosopher, has put it, "to make man the measure of all things."

At the same time, we have seen that there were some very good reasons which may have made Shakespeare unwilling to air his opinions too openly. He lived in an age in which religious controversy had long excited violent and un-Christian passions which must have seemed to him altogether deplorable. Thus, a man of his temperament might well be inclined to leave the matter alone, the more so as he knew that he could scarcely say anything which would not expose him to malevolent criticism from some quarter. For though England was certainly in a better way than any other Continental country, this was simply because Elizabeth and her councillors had made a sincere effort to assimilate what was best in each without yielding to the extremists in either party.

With this moderate and characteristically English policy Shakespeare was doubtless in full agreement. By the close of the century time had begun to perform its healing office. The bitterness caused by the persecutions of the earlier years was passing away, and all men of good will were glad of it.

That Shakespeare in all his mighty output has so comparatively little to say about religion is therefore not surprising. But we are not at all justified in concluding from his silence that he was without belief.

On the contrary, his works do suggest strongly that he believed in God, in the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Atonement and the immortality of the soul.

And in his last testament he writes :

I commit my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting; and my body to the earth whereof it is made.

Sir Sidney Lee declares indeed that the will is drawn up "in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions. What those opinions were we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing." But this last statement surely goes too far.

\* \* \* \* \*

Coleridge said that from his astonishing and intuitive knowledge of what man must be at all times Shakespeare has come to be looked upon more as a prophet than a poet. And, as Walt Whitman reminds us, the true sense of the word prophet is not limited to prediction, for a prophet is one whose mind bubbles up and pours forth as a fountain, from those inner divine spontaneities which reveal God. Prediction is only a minor part of prophecy. The great matter is to reveal and outpour the God-like suggestions pressing for birth within the soul. And this Shakespeare did.

When Shakespeare had reached the top of his art (says Bell) and could command all its resources, having within easy mastery the heights and the depths of

tragedy, he passed more and more under the conviction that the deeper laws and bearings of human life are moral; and in all of his greatest work, in spite of inevitable difference of form and purpose, there is much in common with the utterances of the Hebrew prophets. . . .

The supreme poet of our literature was no mere purveyor of superficial excitements; he had a nature of prophetic strain and developed into an impressive preacher of righteousness, a keen discernor and a powerful unfoldor of the secrets of the heart.

Ben Jonson, the other great dramatist of his day, tells us that the players often said in honour of Shakespeare that having once written he never blotted out a line.

Yet it may be true that he *sometimes* did, and if we had those lines before us, we should have no more need to speculate upon the part which religion played in his life.

And so we leave him, the Master, the broad river of whose genius flows in beauty, and will do so until the end of time.

"He was honest," said Ben Jonson, "and of an open and free nature. I loved the man and I do honour to his memory on this side idolatry. . . ."

As we do now !

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Acknowledgments to: *Shakespeare*, by John Drinkwater; *Biblical and Shakespearian Characters Compared*, by Rev. James Bell; *Religion and Morality of Shakespeare's Works*, by C. J. Plumptre; *Life of F. W. Robertson*, by Stopford Brooke; *South Place Religious Society Discourses*, by J. M. Robertson; *Studies in Religion and Literature*, by W. S. Lilly; *Shakespeare and His Plays*, by Rosa E. Grindon; *Shakespeare—His Religious and Moral Sentiments*, by H. F. Goodson; *Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage*, by C. H. Herford; *The Religion of Shakespeare*, by George Siebel.

# JESUS OF NAZARETH





## JESUS OF NAZARETH

**L**ED by the Son of God, the Sons of the Morning presented themselves before the Eternal Throne and proclaimed:

"EARTH IS BORN."

Out there in space a spinning ball of phosphorescence was beginning to cool.

Lucifer gazed at it scornfully

"Earth—Man—this Nursery for Paradise!" he scoffed.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Eternal spoke:

"How shall we prepare man for his state of everlasting joy and felicity?"

"We must give him a conscience as guide!" said Michael.

"Give him a hundred consciences," said Satan, "and he will stifle them all."

"I will guide the pen of those who write his laws," said Gabriel.

"Man-made-from-dust cannot obey any law but jungle-law," said the Mocker.

"He must be told that God is His loving Father and that all men are brothers," said the Son.

"Write that in blazing fire across the Heavens, and he will laugh at your words in the first generation and forget their meaning in the second," sneered the Spirit of Evil.

"But it will be written in his own language in the Book," said Gabriel.

"They will kill those who write the Book and then

*hate the God who made them a suffering race," said the Mockers.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*There was a pause in Paradise.*

*The Eternal spoke again :*

*"One of us must go down and prove our love by sharing their sufferings and dying with them and for them.*

*"He must show the way and be the Way.*

*"Which of the Sons of the Morning will empty Himself and become Son of Man?"*

*As He offered Himself, the countenance of the Son of God shone like His Father's throne.*

*But on the face of the Devil was envy triumphant :*

*"The Lord hath delivered Him into my hand!"*

\* \* \* \* \*

A little group of travellers have escaped from the Holy Land to the peaceful seclusion of Cæsarea Philippi, whose temples disagreeably remind them of the gods of Pagan Rome. Near at hand is the grotto where the Great God Pan is worshipped by Greeks. Over there on the hillside is a new temple of white marble erected by Herod the Great for the worship of a man and a Gentile—Augustus Cæsar!

Presently the company will return to Jerusalem, the Holy City, there to start the greatest and most successful revolution seen on earth.

With them is their leader; so very different from other revolutionary leaders and world-conquerors. He draws the world to Him wherever He goes; and yet He is the Man of Mystery. Even His intimates cannot make up their minds who He is. The question of the hour is, Who is this preacher Who calls Himself the Son of Man?

From infancy His countrymen have been taught to look for such as He; for the Good Time Coming when the Perfect Man shall open a new age of liberty and world dominion for God's Chosen Race.

In the past there had been the prophets. But there have been no true prophets these three hundred years. This man has the bearing, the appearance, and the signs of the prophet; and more than a prophet—the Deliverer Himself.

He is tall and handsome, and ruddy like David. "Wine-colour shone His hair." There is about Him a mildness and a tenderness, a radiancy and a majestic dignity which make Him beloved of all save those who fear Him as their rival.

The children thronged round Him, and in every succeeding generation they have delighted to hear the stories which He told.

He does amazing things.

A natural Healer, He seems able to cure any disease; they say that He has even raised the dead. He turns water into wine and walks on the waves.

In His hands a couple of small fish become a miraculous feast for thousands; and He never does these miracles without a purpose. He speaks courageously and with authority; He attacks the priests and tell them that they are teaching error.

He has fire, leadership and great intelligence; there is a freshness and originality about Him which excites the greatest curiosity. He has it in His power to be as great as, or greater than Cæsar or Alexander; if He cares He may yet achieve what Mahomet or Napoleon will presently do.

But—there is just one thing which puzzles them. Despite His unflinching courage, He has a

habit of disappearing into remote places just when they are about to proclaim Him their King and Deliverer.

What is His secret? Why does He shirk what seems to be His obvious destiny?

By way of answer He smiles and tells His friends of an experience which He once had.

It was like this. When He was about thirty years of age there came a message from the supernatural telling Him Who He really was, and confirming what He had long thought to be true.

It happened over there by Jordan, where His cousin had baptized Him. Leaving John to continue his preaching, He had gone into the desert to think things out.

The days passed, and He became ravenously hungry, for He had fasted more than a month. Something whispered to Him that if what had been told Him were true He might use His new power to satisfy His hunger.

But He declined, knowing that the power was sacred, and must not be used to gratify His human cravings. And thus He had set an example to His followers in each generation not to use their spiritual powers for gain, but to rely upon God to supply their material needs.

Something whispered again, saying that He might test His power—just to make sure of it—by throwing Himself off a high peak. Again He refused: that power must not be used for stunts, to make men gasp at useless miracles. Not so must He win men's souls. For it was not His mission to be a cheap-jack magician waving His wand in the face of a gaping and credulous world.

Furthermore, though it might be invoked to save the lives of others, His new power must not be used to save His own life, save perhaps when men would seek to prevent Him from preaching the Gospel.

There were three of these whispers, and they seemed to cover the whole range of human temptation. Yet they had a special meaning for One who had newly found Himself endowed with miraculous powers, just those powers which vain human nature would be eager to exploit for its own glory, rather than for the glory of God.

The third whisper suggested that He might, if He would, become a world conqueror like Cæsar or Alexander.

But on that day He had conquered the lust to conquer, and so whenever the people tried to compel Him to do their will, He would disappear. And now He asked His companions the question which was troubling so many minds, their own included :

“Who do you think I am ? ”

One of the party boldly affirmed that the Son of Man is the Son of God, and was told that he could not have made the discovery unless God had revealed this to him.

Soon the group are to discover that the question now asked and answered is to become the test question for eternal life. For the answer shows the spiritual state of the man who gives it.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now they learn more of the remarkable range of His mind.

He has seen a vision that transcends the grandeur

and glory of any earthly empire. He will found a new and everlasting Kingdom which shall encircle the globe, and shall join heaven and earth, a Kingdom in which His followers shall take their place, and against which the very gates of hell shall not prevail.

This Kingdom, infinitely glorious, is to be unlike any kingdom yet seen on earth. In it there will be peace and goodwill for all, because its citizens will have discovered a new and better way of life. They will all be welded into a spiritual brotherhood, the mark of whose membership is that they have gained everything by losing everything, and therefore they shine like lights in the world.

Those who will be first in this Kingdom shall be the last, and the last first; the greatest shall be the least, and the least greatest.

None shall be excluded who have repented—that is, who have changed their mind toward God, and now think of Him as Father and of their neighbour as brother. But they must not think of God as One Whose wrath must for ever be appeased with sacrifices and offerings; for God is their Father, and has always been their Father, though the world has never realised it.

The Son of Man spoke the word Father in His first recorded sentence and in His last :

“Don’t you know that I must be about my Father’s business?” “Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

\* \* \* \* \*

These followers, the first twelve to enter His new Kingdom, can hardly understand Him.

One of them suddenly bursts out :

"We wish to see the Father. We want you to show Him to us; then we shall know what He is like. That will satisfy us."

"Exactly !", He replies, not at all disturbed by the amazing demand. "That is just what I came to do. And further, that is what I have been doing all the time. Can't you understand that the Father is constantly working and speaking through me ?

"If you could only realise it, I am just what He is like. You see, He is not a man, for He is Infinite. But He has now condescended to become a man. I am His gift to the world—His gift of Himself. If you have watched me closely and listened to me carefully, you have seen and heard the Father all the time, because I only do what I see the Father doing; for the Father has decided to reveal Himself in me—and in me He doeth His works.

"Until now mankind have been seeing His works in Nature and sometimes hearing His voice in the sayings of the prophets. But now the Father has chosen to give flesh and form to His Word. So look at me. I am the Father, His very Word, clothed in flesh as a Man !—*I am the Visible Image of the Invisible God.*"

A startling and staggering assertion ! But one to which all the finest of those who have succeeded Him bear witness. In their lives His words have been justified.

So He goes on with the great task of showing the world—the Father.

When He called the children to Him and blessed them—that was the Father. When He entered

the Temple and threw out the profiteers from the Court of the Gentiles—that was the Father in vigorous action as a man.

In the story of the Good Samaritan it was the Father telling men of the world how to act towards their neighbours.

When the Son of Man said : Happy are the poor, the humble, the persecuted, the mourners, it was the Father Who was telling them what they would find true in their own experience here or hereafter.

\* \* \* \* \*

One day there was a harrowing scene. A woman who had been caught in sin was brought to Him for sentence. The Father had told Him to set His face against immorality, and so He had declared that anyone harbouring immoral thoughts was an adulterer at heart.

That too was something new. The will to sin is as the sin itself.

But their old law was unconscionably hard. It said that this woman taken in adultery must be stoned to death.

Well, His Father's answer was :

“If you men must throw stones at each other, then he who is sinless had better throw the first.”

Never surely did a company of stone-throwers receive such a shock from their own missile.

When the accusers had gone away discomfited the Son of Man looked into the eyes of the daughter of sin and asked if anyone had thrown at her.

She said “No.”

“Neither shall I,” He said.

Is there in all the records of man any story which better illustrates the discomfiture of the self-



righteous? Thus did God look sin in the face, the face of a guilty woman, and say:

"After all, why should you be stoned? What about the man? There are plenty like him among your accusers; and all are as bad as you. I am sorry for you and them. And I shall not condemn you.

"But for your own sake, and my Father's, and Mine, and for the sake of others—since sin harms us all—you must turn away from it both in thought and act. Your own experience has taught you already that sin is injurious. It places a barrier between you and God your Father. It prevents you from achieving your glorious destiny, which is to be holy—as He is holy. Your Father wishes to dwell with you and you to dwell with Him, but He can only do so in holiness.

"Nevertheless, I do not condemn you, for I came not to applaud the righteous, but to rescue sinners."

In fact He came to show what the Father was really like. Emphatically He was not the wrathful Jehovah towards unfortunates overtaken with sin. The Father had no wish to break, but to strengthen the bruised reed; He had no intention of quenching the smoking flax, but of fanning it into a spiritual flame.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was God's purpose that men and women should be made perfect like Himself, and one day they would be perfected; therefore those who came into His Kingdom must act towards others as He had just acted towards this woman taken in sin.

Those who chose to act otherwise were obstructing His great benevolent purpose for mankind and

striking their Benefactor a blow in the face. And themselves as well.

These could not enter the Kingdom, not because they were unwanted or because there was no room, but because they were unable to endure its perfection.

Yet, if left outside, as some would be, they had only themselves to blame. They had been invited to the feast, but had impudently declined. They had done so because their mind was wrong.

He told them why it was wrong :

“ From within, from the heart of man, the designs of evil come : sexual vice, stealing, murder, adultery, lust, malice, deceit, sensuality, envying, slander, arrogance, recklessness—all these evils issue from within, and they defile a man.”

The Son of Man was indignant because the teachers of religion persisted in misrepresenting God, even as some do to-day. He told them many stories to change their view of Him—stories of simple beauty unexcelled in literature. That story of the younger son who snatched his fortune before he had earned it, like many moderns who try to snatch their celestial inheritance from earthly follies.

Returning home penniless, expecting to be treated like a servant, he was received with forgiveness and extravagant welcome. The Divine storyteller said that there is joy in Heaven over all such wanderers who return.

The story of the Prodigal Son is the history of all mankind. It has been told millions of times during the past two thousand years to show what the Father is like, but still it is only half believed. When Christianity can induce men who have done the worst things to realise that this story is a true

portrayal of God and themselves, their minds will change naturally and their conduct with it.

The Son of Man carried the lesson further.

Not only did the Father welcome home the wanderer, but, like a shepherd seeking the lost sheep, He sought him until He found him. That was why the Son of Man was on earth. That was the measure of the Father's love and determination to change man into one fit to dwell with Him in His glory.

The worst man alive entered the Kingdom from the moment he chose to think of God as his Father and of his fellows as brothers. Despite the fact that some who thought they were securely inside disdained the newcomer as an intruder.

\* \* \* \* \*

But why change one's mind ?

Simply because it led to a change of the whole man. When a man changed his mind towards God, God's purpose was beginning to be accomplished in him. God, working through his mind and surrendered will, would bring him to his highest destiny.

Then what became of his sins ?

It was true that the physical consequences of sins might follow, seeing that what a man sows he must reap. Nevertheless, God, Who was capable of raising from a heap of stones children unto Abraham, could, and often did, transform the fruits of evil actions in a dead past into good for mankind, including the transformed evildoer.

Even one's past sins, now they were turned from, could be used for enlarging His Kingdom. As the Apostle Paul clearly proved.

Moreover, the guilt of sin—that which kept a man separated from God—vanished at once. And because the guilt of sin was removed, the natural personal relationship between man and God, severed by sin, was restored. The new member of the Kingdom might not feel it, but it was a fact, and a new peace would come which would presently prove it.

With this forgiveness came the power to live a life of holiness, the state in which God dwells. When man was tempted to sin again, he called on God his Father to keep him from another separation, and that call for help was always answered: the mind was lifted from the thought of sin to the Saviour from sin.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin.

As soon as man began to live righteously he began to live the life of God; he knew, by sharing that life, that God dwelt in him and he in God.

But, He was asked, how could these things be?

If God forgave and bore the weight of sin, and all that was needed was to believe it, then everybody might wish to keep on sinning.

Not at all. When they realised Who they were sinning against—their Father—they would cease to sin. And those who had sinned the most would thenceforth love the most.

Naturally there were some who would harden themselves against their Father's affection, and so shut themselves out of their inheritance. And among them would be some who assumed that they were already in possession of it, those who wanted to be first in everything, who chose the best seats,

who liked to be well thought of, who for a pretence made long prayers, who looked most pious, though their thoughts were unclean—whited sepulchres, in fact, who made others perform every petty detail of irksome religious observance while they neglected the important things themselves, love of God and mercy toward their neighbour. Such hypocrites would be the very last to enter the Kingdom. Even the publicans and the prostitutes would get in before them.

The rich, too, were going to find it very difficult to obtain entrance, because they *would* foolishly trust in their riches instead of in their Father and in the righteousness of His Son.

It was so hard for them to understand that time and chance happeneth unto all men, and that they must make a definite choice between serving God and serving money: and one or the other they must hate.

\* \* \* \* \*

Men crowded round the new prophet, anxious to know more and more.

His teaching was so fresh and unusual.

Eagerly they listened, intently they watched Him; they followed Him up and down the Holy Land, expecting that at any moment He would redeem Israel.

He shattered some more of their illusions.

They had been worshipping the Sabbath rather than the God of the Sabbath. This must stop.

It would seem that no good thing could be conferred upon man but that he must abuse it. Sunday was God's gift to man of a day of rest, worship and improvement; for though man must work

during the week, he should realise that he was more than a clod of the fields, and more than a human machine. He had a right to a day of relaxation from field-grubbing and money-grubbing, to prepare himself for the better things coming to him.

The seventh day was given for man's benefit; not to be made more irksome than the rest of the working-day week. In fact, man was not made for Sunday, but Sunday was made for man! But some of Christ's followers still refuse to believe Him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Both then and now the Son of Man carries us further than we are willing to go. He says that if our minds are really right towards God we need not worry about material things; food and clothes will come to us as they do to the sparrows.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." His Church has never fully learned that lesson.

This was not to be an excuse for laziness, for His followers must work conscientiously for their masters, as though they were working for their Heavenly Father. They must seek in prayer the opening for their industry: "Give us this day our daily bread," but they must use their God-given faculties in other directions.

Until their prayers were answered and their co-operation with God brought forth fruit in their lives, they might rely upon Him to sustain them. Yet men still hesitate to throw themselves upon the Word of God for their needs, many perhaps because they are greedy to obtain far more than is good for them. And we are not promised an excess.

But if our minds are right towards Him we shall be given what we require from our Father's table. Sometimes it is better for us to have less than we receive, for although He probably did not say so, more people die of over-eating than of starvation.

Only failure to unite our wills with God's will prevents the law of supply from working.

Yet this attitude towards God does not render banks and insurances and everyday business of buying and selling obsolete, for the promised supplies may quite well come through these channels. What does matter is that we should depend upon God for our necessities, and not upon these or other human channels.

The man who puts his confidence in riches is just a blind fool who has made friends with the slave rather than the Master, and whose soul may be required of him at any moment of the day or night.

There is a civil war raging in every Christian—God versus mammon. Not until he despises the money and cleaves to God has he learned the secret of life, or become a real follower of the Son of Man.

\* \* \* \* \*

There never was preached so searching and uncompromising a sermon as the Sermon on the Mount; if the average congregation were to hear it to-day for the first time they would be frightened into fits :

Happy are the poor and the pure.

Do not defend yourself, but rejoice when you are slandered.

Bless the man who has made your life unbearable by persecuting you.

Agree with your adversary.

Be anxious about nothing.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth—let God be your banker.

Give freely to those who need; but if you put your name at the head of a list of donations, just for others to see it—that is all the reward you will get.

Pray in secret, fast in secret, give in secret. God will reward you openly.

Strive to pass through the strait and narrow gate into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Bring forth good fruit, or you may lose the Kingdom.

Those who did as He said, would find that when trouble came, although they had no bank balance, but only invisible treasures in Heaven, they were standing securely on a rock, whilst those who disobeyed would be submerged.

Each one of us, He says, holds the key of our eternal success or failure. And each of us will hear the commendation "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these—enter . . ."; or the condemnation, "Inasmuch as ye did it not—depart . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

As they moved about the country the Son of Man would see men carrying crosses, despised men going to their death. He said that the Father wanted even men like that to help Him build the Kingdom. Indeed, all those who followed Him must be prepared, if necessary, to carry one of those crosses and be nailed to it.

This man Simon Peter, who, like the others, would do exploits after He was gone, would certainly have to carry one of them.

Such talk as this was frightening. His sayings



were so hard that many left Him because of them. But those who stayed reached a joy in sacrifice which could not be induced by any other earthly pursuit. One such exclaimed in language unparalleled :

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Because His teaching was new and challenging, and supported by miracles beyond their understanding, the religious leaders of His day had Him flogged until His flesh was in ribbons, and then crucified.

He had prophesied His fate, and He deliberately courted it. He steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem; to be followed later, with the same steadfast purpose, by the Apostle Paul, the disciple whose life was probably the closest copy of his Master's.

It seems to have been His purpose during His ministry not to make a public claim to being the Messiah, but rather to let men discover the fact for themselves from what He said and did. Happy was the man who found nothing in Him that would offend.

Therefore it was not until after He had been betrayed by one of His followers, and challenged by the High Priest in terms which, if evaded, would have made Him despicable, to say definitely if He was or was not the Christ, that He publicly proclaimed Himself, and added that in the future His accusers would see Him coming in clouds of glory. Thus He deliberately wrote His own death-warrant.

There was now no need for more evidence. He had given them the proof, which they called blasphemy, required for a charge of treason against Cæsar, and to assuage their envy by having Him crucified by their Gentile overlords.

*Not Satan, but the Son, had delivered Him into their hands.*

\* \* \* \* \*

The brief records give a number of moving incidents which took place during His Passion; but one which is rarely commented upon, though it indicates His nature as truly as any, was His action immediately after His betrayal.

Challenged in the garden He said to them :

"Yes, I am Jesus of Nazareth. And now that I have admitted it, there is no need for you to give yourselves any more trouble. So," turning to His frightened disciples, He said :

"Let these men go away."

His first thought at the moment of peril, like His thought for His mother when He was on the Cross, was not for Himself, but for others.

The Son of Man preached brotherly love, and constantly practised it.

\* \* \* \* \*

For six hours of agony He hung on the Cross, mocked by His enemies, who dared Him to release Himself and thus prove that He was the Son of God.

But He had won that battle in the Wilderness.

Were He to have left the Cross alive He would not have endured death for every man.

He even declined the offer of wine, drugged to dull the senses and lessen the anguish. Only by

dying in agony could He show what He came to prove—that God so loved the world.

But by coming forth alive from the tomb He showed that His Father had not deserted Him, and that death itself could not triumph over a sinless Son of Man after He had suffered and made atonement for the sons of men.

And before He ascended He told His followers that after His Gospel had been preached to all nations He would come again.

Some think this is the Eleventh Hour. But about half the human race is still living without knowledge of Christianity.

\* \* \* \*

The Son of Man overshadows the great figures who came before and those who have succeeded Him.

Under the Crescent the lives of the conquered were spared by their conquerors if they became Mahommedans. Thus Mahomet extended his kingdom.

Christ offered death in this world to those who followed Him, and He has been followed by a great army to a martyr's grave. And though in all their afflictions He was afflicted, He also came that they might have life, and have it more abundantly. With that super-abundant life upwelling within them the early Christian martyrs went singing to their doom. For they had proved His words that to lose is to find, that those who forsake all for Him receive more in this life than they lose; and they had confident faith and a foreshowing that in the next world they would enter into life everlasting.

Napoleon confessed that Jesus of Nazareth was

more than a man. Dostoievski said that he would sooner be wrong with Him than right with anybody else who had ever lived. The great names in this book have in their own way rendered Him their homage. All those who follow Him sincerely die confident in His presence. Those who disregard Him lose His consolation.

How is one to know that He was the Son of God? He supplied the answer. To all who sought to follow His teaching God would supply the strength which they needed. And so "He that willeth to do His will shall know of the doctrine." And those who accept the invitation know that He keeps His promise. How do they know? Doing is knowing. They have the witness within themselves. The Spirit of God is the witness. His Spirit bears witness with our spirit. Somewhere along the way He walked we meet Him—the Way.

"But," asks the unbeliever, "how can I find out for myself?"

Let him think of the case of St. Paul, who was not even seeking to know the truth when he had the vision on the Damascus Road, and was presently told that he had been specially chosen to see the Righteous One and to bear His message to the Gentiles.

A blinding light and a voice were Paul's way of revelation.

But the way is not always the same. It may be a strange inward warming, such as came to Wesley, or a voice bidding him "take up and read," such as St. Augustine heard, or the flaming Cross in the Sky—the vision of Constantine.

Other men have had no such experience, but,

like Spurgeon, have turned away from themselves to the Cross, and thus have gained what has become an assurance. It is really the exception for a seeker to have an experience, objective or subjective, which gives immediate proof; and it is unwise to expect it. Often there is a period of darkness and gloom through which the seeker has to pass. But he is sure to pass out of that stage into the sunlight of God's smile. That has sometimes been brought about instantaneously by an act of faith; by saying, "I believe this is true; help Thou mine unbelief. I will act as though it were true, and wait until the assurance comes. I offer what I know of myself to what I know of God." *He is then in the Kingdom.*

The Kingdom of Heaven may come into a man's life with or without observation. There is no promise that it will come in any remarkable way. What is promised is that those who seek shall find, and that those who do His will shall know. How they shall find and how they shall know no one can say.

Many newcomers to the Christian faith show needless anxiety—because they have not the right perspective. They think that it is up to them to prove Christianity to themselves and others, forgetting that our religion is not the invention of man, but God's grand scheme for the redemption of man, the only scheme which will ever be effectual, or upon which anyone can safely rely. It is the work and the will of God to see that Christianity succeeds, as it must in the case of any man who is in earnest. But the seeker must not forget the means by which God's help will come to him—prayer, the Word, the Church, the Sacraments of

the Gospels, his witness to others in word and conduct.

It is not easy for the newcomer to the Kingdom to believe the good news, but believe it he must, that despite his past, and although he may not feel particularly joyful himself, his change of mind is causing joy among the angels of God. Presently, when he is released from the depression into which he may have fallen through the weight of wrongdoing, a transport of delight may come; for that is a well-known experience in Christianity. Yet some natures never enjoy that state of rapture on earth. Others miss both that and the peace that passeth understanding because they have not begun to bear fruit: love, generosity, peace, longsuffering, patience, kindness, temperance, and all the virtues of Christianity. It may be that he must make restitution for some wrong done to a neighbour, which could and should be put right.

Lately a great deal has been said about restitution, and sometimes too much emphasis has been laid upon this aspect of Christianity. There is little about it in the Bible. And it is possible to become so introspective about comparatively unimportant things as to neglect the weightier matters of the Kingdom.

Some will go blindly to right a wrong, and do more harm than good. To confess a sin to another person and thereby to give that person an unnecessary shock is just the old sin of selfishness masquerading under a new cloak. To my knowledge that has been done, and Christians need to be warned against it. Nevertheless, where it is practicable, wrongs should be righted, stolen goods restored,

injuries redressed and faults admitted. When these things are put right, then, and not before, we may expect the true happiness of Christian living.

\* \* \* \* \*

Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, or conversion, is a life-long process, and the greatest harm can be done by suggesting that as soon as people change their mind, or right-about-turn, everything is going to be well with them.

That was the mistake of the old evangelising technique of the last century; but the whole witness of the saints contradicts it. This change, or conversion, is undoubtedly a special grace; but the Christian life is a continual struggle.

Some evangelistic work fails because a man, weary with the struggle for existence, but not without a religious background, albeit quite undeveloped, is attracted to Christianity without having any real conception of what Christianity is. He believes that religion will give him something, and he is assured that if he will only turn to God joy and peace will come flowing into his life. And when he finds that turning to God is not quite so easy as he had supposed and that he still remains very much as he was before he is apt to go away thinking that he has been "had."

The wise physician is more frank with his patient. He tells him that the complication of ailments which he has diagnosed can be removed, but only as a result of weeks, months, and even years of carefully-disciplined life. Nevertheless, the patient can be assured that he will be healed, for the Great Physician has undertaken his case. And after he has had a few weeks of the Christian life he will

look back with surprise at what he has thus been enabled to achieve through His strength being made perfect in weakness.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Son of Man prayed frequently, and taught others to pray with importunity.

Most people neglect this teaching, and thereby wilfully throw aside something which would bring a great deal of needed power into their lives.

Prayer is an act of creation. He who will pray three times daily and not be afraid of an hour's creative prayer at a time, will release into his own life and into the world an incalculable amount of beneficial energy.

I asked a minister in the north who had just been called out of retirement to rejuvenate a derelict church, and who had succeeded amazingly, the secret of his success.

"You know," he said.

I didn't. So he said :

"Five meetings for prayer every week."

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE BRIGHT SHADOW

And may I conclude by repeating from *One Thing I Know*, though in revised phraseology, a personal experience.

\* \* \* \* \*

Days of dullness and irritation !

Drab days and days of sympathy with Jonah :

"It is better for me to die than to live."

And then—*The Day*.

\* \* \* \* \*



An old friend invited me to Bideford to speak at special meetings.

It was a new experience, and the week slipped by; there were many addresses, and a good deal of personal work. So far as I can remember, that busy Sunday of January 8, 1933, was spiritually unclouded.

The day was crowded; six addresses had to be given, and, partly because of the busy week that had passed, none had been prepared.

Immediately after breakfast, interviews began, two addresses in the morning, a caller's difficulties occupied the time between service and lunch; then a busy afternoon, a busier evening, and continuous work until midnight.

\* \* \* \* \*

*He came that morning.*

The congregation were singing and I was in the pulpit. The church is large, and there is a fine window over the entrance lobby, at the far end.

An unaccountable moisture in my eyes drew my attention.

Unquestionably He was there; about two-thirds of the way down the church; above the congregation; and moving towards the light.

A vision of rare beauty. No halo, the noble head upraised in profile, slightly turning towards the window. Incomparable richness of colour. Not in art gallery, nor in modern ballroom, has such exquisite beauty of form or colour ravished the beholder's gaze.

Later I read for the first time that "legendary" description, said to have come from a Roman Pro-Consul, and contained in the Vatican Library, which Sir Edwin Arnold has transposed into great poetry;

and there was little difference between what I saw and what I read save that there was nothing terrible in Him :

His fair hair is long, flowing down to the ears and thence to the shoulders.

It is slightly crisped and curled, parted in the middle and falling on either side, as is the custom of the Nazarene.

His cheeks are somewhat rosy, the nose and mouth are well-shaped, the beard is thick and the colour of a ripe hazel nut ; it is short and parted in the middle.

His looks reveal both wisdom and candour. His blue eyes at times flash with sudden fire.

This Man, usually so gentle in conversation, becomes terrible when He reprimands ; but even at such times there seems to emanate from His Person a safe serenity.

His voice is grave, reserved, and modest. He is as handsome as a man can be.

He is called Jesus, the Son of Mary.

I could not see the colour of His eyes ; the beard was not thick, but :

Wine-colour shone His hair  
Glittering and waved, an aureole folded down.

There was crimson shading to royal blue, and deepening into purple in the mantle about His shoulders.

He may have been there for five minutes, or even ten ; I cannot say. He stayed on, moving slowly towards the light. And presently He was not there.

So far as I know, none other saw Him that morning ; for He was not seen with eyes ; nor was the vision of Him due to imagination. My mind was not given to dwelling on the personal appearance of our Lord.

Had it been imagination, a far more adequate

picture could have now been presented; but the imagination is incapable of reproducing what passed before my inner eye, that eye of the spirit with which some day we shall see eternally.

Beholding, it was as though through rain-washed glass, yet the vision was distinct; later I read St. Teresa's statement that a manifestation is conditioned by the degree of spiritual progress.

\* \* \* \* \*

That evening, in another church, in the same town, I asked: "Shall I see Him again?"

The service had just begun.

*And He returned.*

In the morning only His head and shoulders were visible, showing entrancingly beautiful through a rain-shadowed vision. His full Figure came clear in the evening, again in the same position—two-thirds the way down the church and again above the congregation.

A Figure of majesty and deep solemnity; tall, but kneeling.

In the morning His head seemed small, though exquisitely proportioned; in the evening He was looking towards the pulpit, full patrician face, pale, suffering, almost an oval, with eyes deep-set and dignity indescribable.

The morning's manifestation suggested Hofmann's portrait of Gethsemane, but still more the one by Copping, which I had not then seen. But the beard was not so pronounced, and the hair above the neck curled outwards instead of inwards.

There was a brightness and grace about the vision of the morning which was not unlike the "spirit drawing" at Stockholm.

But the evening manifestation was of a motionless Figure of far greater regality and concern than I have seen in any portrait of Christ.

He wore a robe, and it was white underneath, a continuation of a face that was almost haggard as He knelt there in prayer, praying for the world.

And once more the robe covering the tall Figure shaded into blue and purple, and then into the blackness of the background.

From first to last He made no movement. And then He vanished. In the morning He had led the way towards the light; in the evening He had shown that it was the path of prayer.

He had been with us and then He was not. And since then I have had no kindred experience.

Nevertheless, I feel sure that He is still among us—that Great White Figure Who has gone striding triumphantly down the ages and still goes forth conquering and to conquer.

#### THE END

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