

IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

in the earth, and weave his existence into the Divine life, that by and by mortality may be swallowed up of immortality, and eternal felicity be assured him.

One word from Heaven has come to me, the force of which has proved sufficient to hold me and change the course of my life. It was this, 'Ye are not your own',—'ye are bought with a price'. And I would repeat that same word in my brother's ear, to the intent that with me he also may taste of its saving power. I understand that 'not being my own' is the very rudder of the boat in which I am seeking to complete life's journey. Another than I stands responsible, to whom I have but to yield. But I cannot yield unless I place my habits on the altar. They must be sacrificed. As a servant of the Most High, I am not to be bound by any of them. In following the Pattern set me, I am to stand in all the liberty of action of a new-born child. I am called on to unlearn what I have copied from man, and assimilated into my being. Nothing but likeness to the Pattern can save me.

And as the call to reform is unprecedented in the strength, earnestness and intensity of its tone, and as all the earth resounds with it at the present period, should not man heed it? An example must be set to the weak-minded, who are legion, to the young that throng about us, to those for whom we care, to the many whom we love. What if the sacrifice be great? What if there be a wrench, a tearing away equal to the cutting off of a hand, or the plucking out of an eye? Yes, but what if not only my own soul is to be saved, but I am to be given the life of some dear one as well? Is it any wonder if some are found to obey the call, to allow the sword of the Spirit to clear away the web of hallucination, and gladly return to the sober reality of life, which is the sweet lucidity of man's connection

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with Heaven? Shall we marvel if some have found out that the pipe and the cue, the belt and the corset, the curling irons and toilet box, and all the burlesque of up-to-date fashions are abominations with God, and snares to man's unwary feet?

No, we shall not wonder. We shall consider that all is contained in the message, 'Ye are not your own'. Man's habits ought to be God-like, on account of his sacred relationship. The 'Child of Heaven' is to understand that his every deed must glorify his Creator, and bear semblance to the character of his God. He will gladly bear the stigma of being 'so different and awkward', which is sure to be his reward on the part of his fellow man. He will rear the standard of trueness to Nature in the midst of a generation enslaved to the thralldom of perverted tastes and feelings. And man, thus reformed, man standing in the loftiness of his purity, the beauty of his innocence regained, will be a landmark to the wandering, a beacon to the erring, a support to the weak and halting, a saviour to the dying on earth—his own fellows, the objects of his compassionate love, the participators in his joy and his peace in the end!

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THE diet appointed man was designed to be the means of sustaining his life. For the perpetuation of that life special provision had been made and special means provided. The needs of the body would make themselves unmistakably felt, and then man would eat, his aliments hanging about him on the forest trees as fruits, or growing at his feet as seed-bearing herbs.

There is something in this original provision which strongly appeals to our reason. Its simplicity makes it attractive and beautiful. Man's home was not intended to have a kitchen department, his brain not to be engrossed by the culinary art, his time not to be spent in the elaborate combination of foods. Nature herself provided him with everything his Maker had planned for the growth and sustenance of his strength.

I find something almost pathetic in the view, from the point we have reached, of man in his primeval beauty, the majesty of his bearing, the height of his stature, the giant strength of his limbs, feeding on pulse, grains, fruits and nuts. Man of to-day, flesh-fed, blood-fed man, gazes at him, wonders, and shakes his head incredulously.

The duty of sustaining his life, which formed part of man's original charge, constituted at the same time one of the pleasures provided for him. It brought into play the exquisite sense of taste, one avenue out of five through which God communed with his earthly representative, stimulating him to render gratitude for the tangible tokens of Divine goodness. The physical

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satisfaction of being fed when hungry, the delight of slaking thirst, was one of the means by which man was to be kept in touch with the Source of his being.

Man of to-day should not lose sight of the perfect harmony into which his first parents were born, themselves forming part of the sympathetic whole. They were not thrust upon a world of strife, where their interests were prejudicial to all others, and all others inimical to theirs. They suited exactly the places where they stood. The allegiance of all creatures was willingly proffered them. Their surroundings were their heart's delight, nor had they any needs for which their environment made not ample provision.

It would seem futile at this time to dwell on the position of primeval man. And yet, how very much less misapprehension there would be at this late day, had we a more comprehensive understanding of man's condition in his Eden home. Some idea of it is still extant. There is something akin to a Paradise experience when for once in a great while we roam a field, repose in the shade of a forest tree, stoop for a drink at the edge of a sparkling rill. And at such times, when away from the oppressive feeling of a ceiling overhead, and the narrowness of encircling walls, we have a faint idea of what life might have been, had we too been born amid Eden surroundings, and felt at home with Nature, like the ancient pillars of our race.

But it is all gone! The tale almost fails to make any impression. We are different now. Other needs sway our nature in ever-multiplying form, wants which chiefly spring from what we term development, and of which we feel proud as we classify them among the results of civilisation.

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Yes, we are very different now. We have altogether changed. Our tastes can scarcely be compared with those of Adam, and the first generations after him. As far as diet is concerned, we despise what they ate, and they in turn would have refused every dish we feast on. Our dietetics are a thousand times more elaborate than theirs were, and scarcely contain one of the few principles to which they adhered. Still they were taught of their Maker. Still they sustained life to a fabulous age. Still, they were proof against the nefarious influences which sweep away countless unmaturing human lives.

We should seriously consider for how large a share in the acknowledged and deplored difference the change in man's diet is responsible. From 1600 years after creation we find man imbued with the strange notion that he must live on another portion of God's creation than that which had been set apart for him. It is significant that this change of ideas was accompanied by a drop in his longevity from nine to two hundred years. I know that for the justification of man's conduct the argument is advanced that Jehovah Himself, after the flood, gave man to understand that henceforth 'every moving thing that liveth' was to be meat for him, 'even as the green herb'. This fact is undeniable. At the same time the consideration should have due weight, that slaying God's creatures to eat them and suck their blood was one of the great abominations about which the Spirit of God had been striving with man until 'it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.' Hence the careful observer concludes that God, the original order remaining unchanged, removed prohibition to lessen offence in view of the prevailing 'hardness of heart'.—

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Man is as he eats. His nature is developed from what passes his lips. His blood is his life, and that blood is but the vehicle of the aliments he assimilates. The truth of this is unassailable. No man studies the difference between the natures of the lion and the ox and fails to attribute the same to the difference in their diet. We might, therefore, safely claim that man of to-day is vastly different from what once he was, or was intended to be, on account of a change in the elements of his food. And, going further, we might say that, as with the food the nature thereof is inbibed, man at the present time has assimilated what should forever have been foreign to him.

The matter resolves itself into the question whether man is a carnivorous or a herbivorous being. On this point there is great diversity of opinion. Physicians of standing will boldly declare that man's teeth give evidence that it is natural for him to eat meat. Their dictum, however, is easily refuted by referring to the beginning of things, that ever-fruitful source of enlightenment. Before man had sinned, there had been no revelation of decay or death. Before he rebelled, and darkness settled on his mind, his eyes had never looked upon violence or death in any form. All around him was peace, the lion browsing with the ox in the same pasture, side by side. Nor had man seen, imagined, or invented any instrument of death. How then could he have been intended for a carnivorous being, unless at creation the Creator had provided him with the necessaries for prosecuting an existence of guilt and rebellion? Besides, man's teeth have been proved to show nothing of the kind. They classify him as a fruit eater. Fruit in every form, nuts and grains included, is Nature's dish for the sovereign of earth.

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This seems reasonable. But to give man the flesh of animals to eat is unreasonable. Apart from the animalising influence it must have over him, have we ever considered how many mothers would prepare flesh food for their families, if they had to go through the first stages? I may be excused for doubting that the Creator ever designed that man should have no proper food, with which to build up his system, until he could procure the services of a life-destroyer, whom now we call 'butcher'. And in the absence of his agency, how many mothers would take a knife and cut the throat of a lamb preparatory to cooking a meal? What would become of the culinary art but for the intervention of the professional slayer? And if things are thus, why does man think of living on food that cannot be procured without brutality?

It is a perfidious notion that flesh is necessary to feed man. It summons the Most High to the bar of human judgment. It inveighs Jehovah on account of inadequate provision for his representative creature. It casts a slur on the whole of Nature's arrangements. The 'every moving thing that liveth shall be meat to you', which was spoken to a handful on a desolated earth, a remnant *in extremis*, and which was never taken advantage of after the first harvest had come in following the destruction caused by the flood, was limited to the scanty use of the flesh of a small number of animals, when God chose a people to whom He was to make known His will. They were the clean beasts, objects for sacrificial service, known to the ancients long before Noah's day. Yet with it all, the manna, representing the diet of God's choice, filled each mouth every day, until Israel ate of Canaan's welcome corn.

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There is a deeper meaning in this choice of diet in which we distinguish Divine appointment from human dilection. Man was tempted on the point of his appetite. Satan caused Eve to look on the forbidden fruit until 'she saw that the tree was good for food'. She had never seen this before. Nor was it so. She was labouring under the first delusion ever cast over man. She longed to eat of forbidden food in the midst of Eden's plenty—that led to her fall. And to-day, Satan, being Satan still, furnishes mankind ample proof that he has not relinquished his hold on their appetite. Otherwise, would man's diet be what it is?

I ask in all earnestness, would sane man ever eat and drink to his own hurt, if temptation did not preside at his dinner table? We are led to think, taught to think, that certain things are good which are actually injurious; but does the strong provocation excuse our partaking of them? We mix our foods with digestion-destroying condiments, that we may tickle palates, which as a rule have never had a taste of proper food. We drink poisons, diluted, though none the less deadly, in the shape of alcohol, caffeine, theine, and so forth—and why, why should we do it? We are unreasonable and tyrannical in the way we deal with our own bodies! We suffer for the sake of habit, and die rather than expose the impious thralldom of custom. By training inured to mendacity, we consent that even the relation between ourselves and our bodies, our only sure companions through life, the storehouses of our strength and beauty, shall be founded on falsehood.

And yet those bodies are not our own. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?' says God. For my own part I knew it not—I candidly confess, I knew it not, and that is why I used to be

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a slave to taste and the wiles of appetite, and partook of dishes which fill the system with poison. I knew it not, until gradually my eyes opened to the increasing light shed on the Word of God, which caused me to stagger at the revelation 'a temple of the Holy Spirit'. Should God's temple be made unclean, I asked myself, by what I had been taught to introduce into it? And I swore by the living God that it should not be, regardless of custom and all-prevailing practice. I turned, and became a health reformer, constrained by the conviction that my Creator desired to be glorified even in my mortal flesh. And, this considered, I found strength to banish condiments and carcase foods, and poisonous drinks, not in order to be called a vegetarian, but to live naturally, as becoming a man whose eyes bear the scales of ignorance no longer.

I sacrificed taste. Yes, I summoned up my courage, and discarded recommendations which are couched in terms such as 'toothsome', 'palatable', and more generally 'nice'. I consulted the needs of my body, and began to eat and drink accordingly. And my taste rebounded from its more than thirty years' contortion, as a spring does when the catch is removed, back to the naturalness with which I came into the world, not intended to do as others do, but to act as my Maker should demand of me. And, though the change looked cruel, its fruits were sweet.

A mighty longing has taken hold on me that this my body may verily be a temple in which the Holy Spirit can dwell. The hope that is set before me is grand, glorious, and everlasting. I know that I have no purifying strength, but the power at least is allowed me to abstain from what is obnoxious, which will and does prove sufficient inducement for the Spirit of God to make his abode in a human body.

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I have reflected on the possibility of the list of human diseases being gradually lengthened on account of improper diet. All things have a reason, and if man fills his system with poisons in various forms, introducing those deadly elements into his blood, can he expect but to wreck his health? I have studied particularly the strange diseases, usually developing into epidemics, which of late years have been going the round of earth. Surely, I have reasoned, these are not accidental! They do not develop spontaneously! And would man be subject to them, if he had adhered to his Maker's appointments?

To the thinking man the present time is a period of terror. A giant spectre is stalking the earth, scourging mankind with its tail. The term 'pestilence' is becoming horribly familiar to our ears. And despite circumspection in the practical forms of sanitation and quarantine, the dangers to health are thickening. What was harmless in times gone by, is deadly now. Man is straining every nerve to maintain his health, and keep down the percentage of mortality, but his efforts are unsuccessful.

What if he should open his eyes and attend to facts? These facts are, that the dumb creatures about us, those that bear our burdens and, unfortunately, provide with their dead bodies the food on which we hope to thrive, are diseased in a manner unheard of in the history of the earth. As the years roll by, the number of their ailments increases. We have reached a stage where the sleekest cattle in the breeder's stalls are being proved to be sick. Man's scourges seem to affect his dumb companions, theirs him in return. As the horse suffers from influenza, so man contracts rinderpest. Yet, man heeds not the warning, but kills and swallows, daily setting his teeth in the chunk of a death-laden joint.

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The closing period of time has indeed a lesson for man, a lesson so powerful in its effects, that mankind is being divided on the lines it lays down. It preaches reform, it predicts a trial. It speaks of a searching experience through which man is to pass before the end shall come. It opens up to view a test of the veracity of man's character. But wherein could such a test consist except in the acceptance or rejection of truth? The dividing line, in this time of 'gross darkness upon the people' is none other than their allegiance to truth or error. The crowd who are swayed by taste and impulse, inclination and self-indulgence, will stand apart from a few to whom principle has become their all. Gradually advancing on the lines of their heavenly calling, principle teaches them how to eat and drink, how to dress and order their households, and, sacrificing all there is in them of self, denying self by conscious acts of obedience, they are the ones in whom the God of Heaven will reveal Himself to the world gloriously. They are being made 'the salt of the earth'. Having placed themselves in the hands of God, He is fitting them to become a city of light, 'set on an hill, that cannot be hid'. Through them the solemn warning is to be given to the surging crowds, that the verge of eternity has been reached, that the veil is soon to be moved away, that for the brief period remaining, man is called upon to bring his habits, tastes, desires, pleasures, plans, aspirations, all the revelations of his life, into harmony with the will of God which is the salvation of his soul.

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WHEN an attempt is made to uphold man's character, and advocate the excellence of his being, we invariably grow discouraged. We could ever find something lofty to show, something praiseworthy to exhibit, but oh, the infamous way in which man has shackled his own feet, and handcuffed his own wrists!

It is not true that man is free. On the contrary, man is bound! Generation after generation leads the rising one into slavery.

There need be no poetic contemplation of the race—a matter-of-fact way of regarding it is better, and leads to more satisfactory results. What mankind should have been, may be guessed; what it would like to be, may find expression;—yet, what mankind is, that is the point for our concern.

Life is depicted as a drama—a stage action, where certain characters play their rôles after premeditative preparation. This view is false; it is, besides, useless; it is inimical to our best interests. It is a monstrous illusion, disastrous in its effects to countless souls of men.

Life is the act of character-building. Life is development, during which character grows under steady nursing. The seeds of character, constituting Nature's endowment, may be either destroyed or tended. Character is acquired by dint of living—yet its acquisition moulds life. It grows with man as an integral part of his personality—and yet is intended to take the lead over him, and command.

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As such, character is synonymous with liberty. As such, also, it is opposed to curbs and ties. The very acknowledgment of bands is foreign to its nature. Character endeavours to shape man, and, even at this late day, tries to mould him after the original pattern, the traits of which were strength, majesty, and freedom.

Man has not been wise, or prudent, or careful, or true, or reliable, or anything his Maker intended him to be. Had he been, how different would have been his history! But he has not been, nor is he now . . . and that is the end of the consideration. Still, with all he has not been, not done, and not accomplished, it is as astounding as it is deplorable, that he should have devised so many means to tie himself down, and so many contrivances by which to coerce others to share his thralldom. The invention of these has for ages occupied his mind, and does so more than ever at the present day.

Now I would have it known that man was not intended to bear the self-imposed burdens under which we find him stooping. For none other ties was he made than those placed upon him by the law of his God. Wondrous things are revealed to the present living, when they consider what the effect of that law was intended to be. 'If ye obey the royal law, ye will do well.' Life would then be a happy journey regulated by 'the law of liberty'. That glory-encircled expression of the mind of man's Maker would have guided him, shielded him, fed him, clothed him, rendered him immune against disease, surrounded him with peace and plenty during his earthly pilgrimage. Man should know this, seeing it is not too late to profitably reflect on the promised provision. Instead, however, of accepting what God in His abundant kindness had

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provided, rendering every son of earth a centre of strength, wisdom, light, and liberty, man has stumbled and to-day stumbles under burdens which his predecessors have taught him to bear. What sad sight! Man, drunken with vanity, wearing the shackles of a fool! And was he not, as he came to earth of yore,— is he not, as he comes into the world to-day, a free-born being, intended and equipped for numberless successive stages of development; the guide furnished him being Life itself? Then has not every man a path of his own to tread; and if, instead, he chooses a beaten track, is he fulfilling his Creator's design: is he a man?

We should look about us circumspectly. We were guided by others—now we guide others in turn. With regard to our children we actually assume the place of God, our law, which they are made to realise, being to them the interpretation of His, the meaning of which they fail to grasp. These children grow up around us— up to what point do we mean to lead them, before we allow self-assertion, and the assumption of responsibilities? Are we free, so that we can guide them to liberty? Are they safe in following us? Have we eschewed every influence inimical to life?

My spirit is pained when I behold the doings of my brother-man. Some of his ways appear to me so inexplicable! He has a son whom he makes to follow him every step of the way. He destines him for the same occupation by which he has earned his daily bread—but may he? He destines him for membership of the same religious body to which he belongs—but may he? He does not spare him, if he proves himself recalcitrant. Yea, he puts on the rod, fit for the back of a fool, and belabours him with it, as if he were an ass! So he induces him to obey. Yes—and so he kills the man in the boy!

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There should be no parental predilection concerning a child's avocation. What can I know of my boy's destiny? The question asked by the Nazarene boy of old in reply to his mother's inquiry, has been faced by millions of parents since. Only, that mother was moved thereby to meditation, whereas thousands of parents are by it goaded into human cruelty and abject foolhardiness.

Nor should there be any but very distant, and very prayerful guiding in matters touching the inner promptings of the heart. I declare that no pressure exercised on the part of parents to bring about a sameness of conviction can ever end in anything but dark confusion and spiritual hurt. A child's own matured judgment on religious matters must decide him. No conventionalities may be allowed to have any weight in such matters. Should we make hypocrites of young hearts who may be destined, Heaven knows for what?

Likewise should no society-shackles be put on a child against his will. Shall a parent perjure himself, he who bears the most solemn responsibilities of training his child for an eternal existence with God, by obliging such child to participate in frivolities and vanities of which he himself would fain beware, had he not bound himself over to such an extent, that he would rather succumb than throw off the yoke?

The formality of life, the cast-iron mould in which it is presented, is the *vanitas vanitatum* against which we are warned with such grave emphasis. Man, a moral entity, is beset with requirements and obligations, and expected to follow where others have preceded him!

It is this man-following that has become a curse in millions of instances. It should not be! It has been

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proved the very bane of life. It causes a mountain of mischief and iniquity reaching up to heaven.

Man is free—and a voice from above is filling the earth, proclaiming his liberty. And whereas millions are bound and tied, and shamefully shackled, these should be set free. Man's true estate should be taught him. The words free! free! free! must be made to re-echo in the ears of all—free, according to that perfection and ideal of liberty which is found in submission to the all-ruling, eternal law of the Most High.

I desire to take man, my brother, into my confidence, and speak into his ear certain things that must be said. The time for illusions, for belief in the reality of things that are not, the time for pleasantries at the expense of truth, is past. The grim earnestness of the end is upon us.

I have been privileged with a bird's eye view of the world, such as man has made it. It presented a strange appearance. I beheld humanity divided and sub-divided into nations, classes, sects, castes, communities, societies, and companies. These were all hemmed in by narrow boundaries, and the division walls were raised so high as to make it venturesome to scale them. Their foundations were differences of birth, social standing, language, mental development, and religious creed. The web of dividing lines was a curiously-wrought maze, allowing individuals to identify themselves with different companies according to the nature of their fundamental aim and object.

I beheld man in a curious light. His being was sectioned off into departments. One of these suited the company of sympathisers on the point of caste, another that of kindred spirits in the direction of intellectual development, religious persuasion, national distinction, or moral profession. Each associated with his neighbour

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between certain lines, reserving the next section for keeping company with another. The reckless ones, I noticed, overstepped those lines, and embroiled themselves right and left; but the prudent guardedly approached the boundary of sympathy in dealing with their fellows, and made a determined halt whenever they reached it.

I beheld the plan of God reversed on the earth. The broad base of development, the unlimited affinity of spirits which the Creator had designed, had given place to the most circumscribed delimitations of character. The quintessence of life appeared to be narrowness. Man, despite the constant warnings of his own heart, the clear premonitions of his conscience, had pertinaciously stuck to the mania for classification that had preyed upon his mind. I clearly saw that the medley of ingredients in human aspirations, and the multitudinous revelations of man's strong life had been insufficient to check a process of petrification which was nearing its completion, giving the quietus to the spontaneous action of heart, soul, and brain. I beheld the congealing action of the winds of delusion which were disturbing the atmosphere wherein man breathed. He himself, the dethroned monarch of creation, was gradually yielding to the inevitable. I noticed that his tongue was tied, his hands were weak, his knees feeble, his eye was dim, and his gait unsteady. And as my spirit was perturbed at the view, I searched querulously about for the cause, and could detect but one reason—the existence of those division-walls. He appeared by them chained to an unnatural state.

Man's precarious condition has been for years a subject of painful reflection with me. I have probed the question, and thought at first it was a captious one, apt to raise vain cavil; but later, I found that its sadness

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rendered full investigation a matter of duty. It is evident that man has lost something which has deprived him of the majesty of his being. The feeling is inherent in him that he ought to be self-reliant, yet that quality is either absent from his nature, or merely shows itself reflecting his vanity, pride, or foolhardiness. Man has lost the very sense of the fact that implicit reliance on his God was to have been the fruitful source of individuality to which he feels himself called. He has learned to lean on the arm of flesh, and now does so heavily. He has been deprived of that elevation of thought that once lifted him into communion with his Maker. The tyrant to whom he owes allegiance has fagged his spirit. In weariness has he stretched out his languid arm for something to support him, finding nothing better than the sharer of his misery, his own fellow man.

So man has learned to stand by man for mutual support, each encouraging the other to endurance. Losing sight of the Source of Strength, he has sought strength in earthly considerations, in genealogy, claims of nationality, harmony of taste, congruity of sentiment. Men have banded themselves together as freemasons, socialists, nihilists, anarchists, spiritualists; they have established churches, associations, societies and clubs; and so classified and sub-classified themselves, that of freedom few traces are found. They have committed to memory catechisms and creeds, and developed a unanimity of thought and mould of mind, the striking nature of which augurs ill for the abiding presence of truth amongst them. Individuality has been suppressed; great waves of accepted thought carry all before them; unity has been established on the claims of common interest, man consenting to abjure his entity, that generality might hold sway over him.

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But why has he not perceived that this unremitting and laborious effort to take him off his own feet, and assimilate him with the crowd; this sedulous work of generalising his character, is nothing but an act of hostility against his success, his happiness, and his peace? How is it that he has lost sight of the fact that the race of life is after all to be run singly, and the reward to be reaped individually? Who but the enemy of his soul could have cajoled him into the belief that his future is safe as a member of a community, an adherent to a cause, a part of a whole? Is man so blind that he cannot see that classification is a blow at the world's life? Is anything more unnatural than this, that a free-born subject of Heaven should bow his head under a yoke of human manufacture, or that he who is bound by none other than liberty-provoking obligations to a liberty-loving God, should enslave himself to his fellow being, and assume shackles and ties, limitations and trammels, at which his spirit kicks, till it dies within him?

Man is allured by words and phrases, speculative possibilities, and pretended effects which soothe in his breast the craving for rest, for which he is willing to sacrifice all. The rest for which he was intended seems hopelessly beyond his reach. To speak to him of rest found in personal consecration to the service of the Most High God, in individual devotion to, and communion with Him, seems to have a bewildering effect on his brain. He has caught the fever of associating his thoughts, his hopes and ideals, with existing ones, expressed ones, such as he finds committed to paper, categorized as articles of faith, by which he can swear, which he can commit to memory, and to which he can refer. No more thought-life for him—he must follow, he must copy, he

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must mimic. And so only he wishes to redeem his soul ; or rather, so only does he see any chance of it. Moreover, apart from being associated, united, clubbed together with others, and by dint of his association insecurely propped up in the place which he occupies, man has by means of some ingenious invention become 'insured'. Let me speak on this point freely, seeing that Life Insurance has after a hundred years of activity become one of the *sine qua non*'s of civilised life. This somewhat strange matter, the insurance of human life, by which not that life itself was originally intended to benefit, but those rather whose welfare depended on such life, is so entirely a creature of the nineteenth century, as to belong wholly to that period which as the 'time of the end' is distinguished from all other. It has so ingrained itself with modern existence, as to render an attack upon it ridiculous and grotesque. Yet some of us remember that such was not its position before the world had been blinded to its effects. These were erstwhile seriously doubted, as was the propriety of Life Insurance questioned amongst those who had learnt to put their trust in God. Now it has successfully spun its web round mankind, and may boast of having won over to its side almost the entire civilised portion of it. Besides, Life Insurance has become a science emanating from which a message is being proclaimed on earth with no uncertain sound. Still, this does not justify its existence, nor does the undoubted fact that Life Insurance has interwoven itself with the fabric of life's acknowledged necessities, and established itself in society as a matter of course. It regulates marriage, choice of profession, testamentary disposition ; it embraces, octopus-like, all that modernised existence has to show—yet, for all that, it has proved a tie, and perhaps the strongest of the

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many that chain man down to many a prescribed path, where he must walk against his personal conviction.

It is this element in it that makes Life Insurance a burden grievous to be borne; a burden, in fact, which the followers of the Great Example should refuse to bear. The principle underlying its huge structure is grave indeed. It forces man to provide for what shall be after him—an act which renders him a fool. No one, provided with sound judgment, no one acknowledging the government of an all-providing God, will attempt to go so far. The future lies beyond the ken of man, and is none of his. Life Insurance, plausible though its tenets may sound, has become one of the most positive proofs that man is contriving to force the circumstances besetting human life. The father is insured for the children's sake, the wife for her husband's, the children in order to lighten the parental burden. The young are to consider themselves beholden to their elders for the term of their natural lives, as the latter have had themselves insured for the sake of the former. Thus the earth is filled with unnatural relationship and sinful considerations, creating a commercial compact of such magnitude, that my heart, at least, stands aghast at it.

Suppose, I have reasoned, this web were torn by some mighty revolution, and mankind by force placed back in the old paths, where its life moved before Life Insurance came in—who would be the loser? And the answer came to me, that none would suffer loss, save the institutions that trade on the savings of a benighted multitude. The great problem called Life had not any more perils, nor did it present any greater insecurity before the age of Life Insurance, than now. Its perplexities were not any profounder, when the interdependence between men, which brands the present, was far less pronounced than we find it to-day.

MAN IN CHAINS

Man, who is my brother, should with me return to God's original appointments. The sweat of his brow ensures him his keep, and will do so likewise to the younger generation for whose welfare his soul is needlessly troubled. In so far as he will with me prepare for the 'Great Day of the Lord', which will cut short his career on earth by the sudden proclamation of a new order of things, he can well content himself with the present, and leave the future to God. Even a firmly-rooted human institution like Life Insurance he may with safety ignore. It will derive ample support from those whose expectations are of a less defined order. 'Bear no yoke which is not God-appointed', should be the motto of the present-day children of God. They should allow themselves to be persuaded to cast aside all that savours of servile allegiance, or yielding up of individual convictions. As a captive, ensnared by his own foolish hankerings, stunned by his own indifference, chained to his enemy's triumphal car, man has consented to be led away to die—he who was intended never to see death!

It is clear from the prevailing state of things, that we may expect the most startling revelations of depravity and perfidy, the seeds of which are being sown broadcast among men in chains, with whom the devil can do as he pleases. Wandering among them as an angel of light, he has enticed into his service millions of deluded—yet good, misguided—yet honest men, who have consented to share in his work. And that work is—the forging of ever stronger shackles to hold man under, the spinning of ever more intricate webs to bind him. More unions, more societies; always more sects, and more classes; always less of individuality, less of character, less of keen sight, youthful strength, and buoyant hope,—that by the increase of stolidity and the

IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

death of thought, man may the more easily be ensnared in the net which is being thrown over all the race, dragging it away to participation in the doom of Satan and his angels!



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