



Progress, the Universal Law of Nature: Thought, the Solvent of Her Problems.

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AN IMPORTANT LESSON.

With Which Spiritualists Should Be Familiar.

FROM FETICH TO HYGIENE.

The Warfare Which Science Has Had to Wage for Health.

The Church an Enemy of Progress.

OLD METHOD OF PRESERVING HEALTH BY WORKING MIRACLES FOR MONEY. PROPITIATING SPIRITS BY VOWS, GIFTS, PRAYERS, BURNING WITCHES, AND HUMAN SACRIFICES—NEW METHOD BY SANITATION, CLEANLINESS, VENTILATION, PURE AIR, VACCINATION, AND PROPRIETARIES.

The cause of the pestilences which swept over the ancient cities, it is now known, was the want of hygienic precautions. Sanitary efforts were regarded as absurd down to so late a time as that when Napoleon interfered with affairs in Spain.

The sacrifice of life in the times referred to was appalling, and the incidents connected therewith form the subject of a paper from Andrew Dickson White, ex-President of Cornell University, being one of a series in the August number of the *Popular Science Monthly*.

In the Middle Ages these pestilences raged from time to time throughout Europe; the black death and the sweating sickness swept off vast multitudes. The best authorities estimate that of the former at the middle of the fourteenth century more than half the population of England died, and that twenty-five millions of people perished in various parts of Europe. As late as 1532 67,000 patients died of the plague in the Hotel Dieu at Paris, and 158,000 more the year following. All these plagues and pestilences were attributed to the wrath or malice of unseen powers. Such was the view of even the heathen in the most cultured ages before the establishment of Christianity. In Greece and Rome these devastations were attributed to the gods.

In Judea the scriptural records of various plagues sent upon the earth by the divine fiat as a punishment for sin show the continuance of this crude mode of thought. Prof. White cites the epidemic which carried off 14,700 of the children of Israel, and which was finally stayed by the prayers and offerings of Aaron, the high priest; the destruction of 70,000 men in the city of Jerusalem, and King David was punished for the numbering of Israel, and which was only stopped when the wrath of Jehovah was averted in burnt offerings; the plague threatened by Zachariah, and that delineated in the Apocalypse.

For nineteen centuries, since the rise of Christianity to a time within living memory, whenever a pestilence appeared the church authorities have preached the necessity of immediate atonement for offenses against the Almighty instead of devising sanitary measures.

PEOPLE WHO BELIEVED FILTH WAS GODLINESS.

The writer asserts that not only did much of this pestilence arise from a lack of sanitary precaution, but there was a school which, with the aid of the church, taught the reverse of the utterance of John Wesley that cleanliness was near akin to godliness. He says:

"Out of the Orient came the idea that abasement of man added to the glory of God; that indignity to the body secured salvation to the soul; that cleanliness was an evidence of piety, and that filthiness was humility. This assertion is backed by plenty of facts. St. Jerome and the Breviary of the Roman Catholic Church dwell with unctious on the fact that St. Hilary lived a life of uncleanness. St. Anthony was glorified because he never washed his feet. St. Abraham was an evidence of holiness in the fact that he washed neither hands nor feet. St. Sylvia never washed any portion of her body except her fingers. St. Ephraïm belonged to a convent in which the nuns religiously abstained from bathing. The lives of the saints dwell with complacency on the statement that when sundry Eastern monks showed a disposition to break away from the custom and resort to cleanliness, the Almighty showed his displeasure at the innovation by drying up a neighboring stream until the bath which it had supplied was destroyed.

"At the end of the sixth century St. Gregory the Great gave an impetus to the idea that pestilence came of the wrath of God. When he was elected Pope Rome was suffering from a dreadful pestilence, the result of the cholera, and of one procession imploring the mercy of heaven, no less than eighty persons died within an hour. In the midst of all this horror Gregory, as the legend says, saw the figure of Michael in the air sheathing a sword in token that the Almighty's wrath was appeased. The Pope broke forth into hallelujahs, and, as it shortly afterwards became less severe, a chapel was built at the summit of the mausoleum and dedicated to St. Michael; still later, above the whole was erected the colossal statue of the archangel sheathing his sword, which still stands to perpetuate the legend. Thus the greatest of Rome's ancient funeral monuments was made to bear testimony to this medieval belief; the mausoleum of Hadrian became the seat of St. Michael, a legend like this claiming to date from the greatest of the early Popes and vouched for by such an imposing monument, had undoubtedly a vast effect upon the dominant theology throughout Europe, which was constantly developing a great body of thought regarding the agencies by which the divine wrath might be averted.

"First among these agencies naturalists were evidences of devotion, especially gifts of land, money, or privileges to churches, monasteries, and shrines—the seats of fetiches which it was supposed had wrought cures or might work them. The whole evolution of modern history, not only ecclesiastical but civil, has been largely affected by the transfer of the clergy at such periods. It was noted that after the great plague in the fourteenth century the church had passed, an immensely increased portion of the lands and personal property of every European country was in the hands of the church;

well did a great ecclesiastical remark that 'pestilences are the harvests of the ministers of God.'

"Other modes of propitiating the higher powers were penitential processions, the parading of images of the Virgin or of saints through plague-stricken towns, the use of amulets, fetiches. Very noted in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were the processions of the flagellants, trooping through various parts of Europe, scourging their naked bodies, and shrieking the penitential psalms, often running from wild excesses of devotion to the maddest orgies. "Sometimes the fetiches were attributed to the wrath of lesser heavenly powers; just as, in former times, the fury of far-distant Apollo was felt when his name was not respectfully treated by mortals, so in 1680 the church authorities at Rome discovered that the plague then raging resulted from the anger of St. Sebastian, because no monument had been erected to him; such a monument was therefore placed in the church of St. Peter at Vincula, and the plague ceased."

THEOLOGICAL FANATICISM DEFEATS PERSECUTION.

On the other hand, theological reasoning was used in thwarting the malice of Satan. This was seen in Rome in 1522 during the plague. People came to the conclusion that the scourge was the result of satanic malice. In view of St. Paul's declaration that the ancient gods were devils, and on the theory that the ancient gods of Rome were the devils who had the most reason to punish that city for their detestment, and that the great amphitheatre was the chosen haunt of these demon gods, and adorned with garlands and taken to the Coliseum and solemnly sacrificed.

This sort of theological reasoning went further and was more disastrous. It argued that Satan had used the Jews as his emissaries in spreading pestilence. This arose from the fact that the Jews were more cleanly than the heathen, and so far as he could bring his influence to bear on the maddest populace, it was exercised in favor of mercy to these supposed enemies of the Almighty."

"As a result of this mode of thought, attempts were made in all parts of Europe to propitiate the Almighty, to thwart Satan, and stop the plague, by torture and murder of the Jews. Throughout Europe during great pestilences the Jews were burned, and so far as he could bring his influence to bear on the maddest populace, it was exercised in favor of mercy to these supposed enemies of the Almighty."

THE WAR ON WITCHES A PRETEXT FOR BIGOTRY.

From the seat of St. Peter came utterances to the effect that witches were a great cause of disease, storms and other evils. A papal bull to this effect was promulgated. As a result thousands of innocent children were put to death, and with them, from time to time, men. Protestants vied with Catholics in this business of butchery. In the sixteenth century 100,000 in Germany alone were sacrificed. In Milan an old woman saw a man wiping his fingers on the walls of a building. She called the case of popular unreason, and so far as he could bring his influence to bear on the maddest populace, it was exercised in favor of mercy to these supposed enemies of the Almighty."

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Under paganism the rule regarding torture had been that it should not be carried beyond human endurance, and we therefore find Cicero ridiculing it as a means of detecting crime, because a stalwart criminal of strong nerves might resist it and go free, while a physically delicate man, though innocent, would be forced to confess. Hence it was that under paganism a limit was imposed to the torture which could be administered; but when Christianity had become predominant throughout Europe, torture was developed with a cruelty never before known. The ecclesiastical doctrine of "excepted cases" was evolved—those "excepted cases" being heresy and witchcraft; for by a simple and natural process of theological reasoning it was held that Satan would give supernatural strength to his special devotees—that is, to heretics and witches; and, therefore, that in dealing with them there should be no limits to the torture. The result was in this particular case, as in tens of thousands besides, that the accused confessed everything that could be suggested to them, and often in the delirium of their agony confessed far more than all that the zeal of the prosecutors could suggest. Finally, a great number of worthy people were sentenced to the most cruel death which could be invented. The records of their trials and deaths are frightful. The treatise which in recent years has first brought to light in connected form

an authentic account of the proceedings in this affair, and which gives at the end engravings of the accused submitting to horrible tortures on their way to the stake and at the place of execution itself, is one of the most fearful monuments of theological reasoning and human folly.

"THE COLUMN OF INFAMY."

A poor apothecary who had made a magic ointment was put to a horrible death, and his family were obliged to take another name and flee the city. His house was torn down and on its site was erected "The Column of Infamy." It remained on the spot until the end of the eighteenth century, when a party of young radicals leveled it to the ground. Herein was seen the culmination and decline of the bull "Summa de Medicis." It had been used by him whom a vast majority of the Christian world believes to be infallible in his teachings to the church as regards faith and morals, yet here was a deliberate utterance in a matter of faith and morals, which even children now know to be utterly untrue. The plague-stricken city of Rome, during the seventeenth century, was placed by the church authorities upon the Index, and though the faithful throughout the Christian world were forbidden to read it, even this could not prevent the victory of truth over this infallible utterance of Innocent VIII.

FIGHTING CHOLERA WITH FETICH.

As the seventeenth century went on, the whole ingenuity of the human mind in all parts of Europe seemed devoted to new developments of fetichism. A very curious monument of their further evolution in Italy is seen in the Royal Gallery of Paintings at Naples: upon the walls hang several pictures representing the measures taken to save the city from the plague during the seventeenth century, but especially from the plague of 1656. One enormous canvas gives a curious example of the theological doctrine of intercession between man and his Maker, spun out to its logical length; in the background is the plague-stricken city; in the foreground the people are praying to the city authorities for relief. The picture is a masterpiece of the Carthusian monks; the monks are praying to St. Martin, St. Bruno and St. Januarius; these three saints in their turn are praying to the Virgin; the Virgin prays to Christ, and Christ prays to the Almighty. Still another picture represents the people, led by the priests, executing the horrible torture of the Jews, heretics, and witches, who were supposed to cause the pestilence of 1656, while in the heavens the Virgin and St. Januarius are interceding with Christ to sheathe his sword and stop the plague.

In such an atmosphere of thought it is no wonder that the death statistics are appalling. We hear of districts in which not more than one in ten escaped, and some were entirely depopulated. Such appeals to fetich against pestilence have continued in Naples down to our own time, the great saving power being the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius. In 1856 the present writer saw this miracle performed in the gorgeous chapel of the saint, forming part of the Cathedral of Naples. The chapel was filled with devout worshippers of every class, from the officials in court dress, representing the Bourbon King, down to the lowest lazzaroni. The reliquary of silver-gilt, shaped like a large human head, and supposed to contain the skull of the saint, was placed upon the altar; next two vials containing a dark substance, said to be his blood, having been taken from the wall, were also placed upon the altar near the head. As the priests said masses and repeated the creeds they turned the vials from time to time, and the liquefaction being somewhat delayed, the great mass of people burst out into exclamations and petitions to the saint, more and more impassioned. Just in front of the altar were the lazzaroni who claimed to be descendants of the saint's family, and these were especially importunate; even threatening they would be killed if they did not cure to show his favor to the city by liquefying his blood. St. Cosmo and St. Damien were just as good saints as he, and would no doubt be very glad to have the city devote itself to them. At last, on the occasion of my visit, the priest, turning the vials suddenly, announced that the saint had performed the miracle, and instantly priests, people, choir, and organ burst forth into a great Te Deum, bells rang merrily, and the shrine containing the saint's relics was carried through the streets, the people prostrating themselves on both sides of the way and throwing showers of rose leaves upon the shrine and upon the path before it.

The contents of these precious vials are an interesting relic indeed, for they represent to us vividly that period when men were willing to go to the stake for their religious opinions thought it not wrong to save the souls of their fellow-men by pious mendacity and self-devised fraud. To the effect that this miracle is very simple: the vials contain, no doubt, one of those mixtures fusing at low temperature which, while kept in place within the cold stone walls of the church, remain solid, but upon being brought out into the hot, crowded chapel and fondled by the warm hands of priests, gradually soften and become liquid. It was curious to note, at the time above mentioned, that even the high functionaries representing the king, began mainly in 1887, and still going on. The drainage of the city has thus been greatly improved, the old wells closed, and pure water introduced from the mountains. Moreover, at the last outbreak of cholera a few years since, a noble deed was done, which, by its moral effect, exercised a widespread healing

power. Upon hearing of this terrible outbreak of pestilence, King Humbert, though under the ban of the church, broke from all the entreaties of his friends and family, went directly into the plague-stricken city, and there, in the public places, hospitals, and enclosures, the living, comforted the sick and dying, and took means to prevent a further spread of the pestilence. To the credit of the church it should also be said that the Cardinal Archbishop San Felice joined him in this.

Miracle for miracle, the effect of this visit of the king seems to have surpassed anything that St. Januarius could do, for it gave confidence and courage, which very soon showed their effects in diminishing the number of deaths. It would certainly appear that in this matter the king was more directly under divine inspiration and guidance than the church authorities. That King Humbert went to Naples at the risk of his life, while Leo XIII. remained in safety at the Vatican, impressed the Italian people in favor of the new regime, and against the old, as nothing else could have done.

In other parts of Italy the same progress is seen under the new Italian government. Venice, Genoa, Leghorn and especially Rome, which, under the sway of the popes, was always scandalously filthy, are now among the cleanest cities in Europe. What the relics of St. Januarius, St. Anthony, and a multitude of local fetiches throughout Italy, were for ages, while the city has been accomplished by the development of the simplest sanitary principles.

Spain shows much the same characteristics of a country where theological considerations have been all-controlling for centuries. Down to the interference of Napoleon with that kingdom, all sanitary efforts were looked upon as absurd, if not impious. The most sober of the popes, was always scandalously filthy, are now among the cleanest cities in Europe. What the relics of St. Januarius, St. Anthony, and a multitude of local fetiches throughout Italy, were for ages, while the city has been accomplished by the development of the simplest sanitary principles.

Called by the Angels.

"Take Me Up, I am as Light as a Feather."

TO THE EDITOR:—An article in a late issue of your paper, under the caption "Called by the Angels," is so strikingly paralleled by a similar case occurring in my own family twenty years ago, and which, forming a climax to other evidences, settled my wife and I in the firm belief of the truth of our neighborly philosophy. Our son, a bright lad of fifteen years, was, from a sudden attack of pneumonia, in Minnesota, on the edge of the "border land," of which both he and his parents were, at the time, entirely ignorant. Seated by his bedside, with his hand clasped in hers, sat his mother talking lovingly of passing events, his mind clear and rational, suddenly pointing to the foot of his bed he asked his mother: "Who are those children talking and laughing and singing there? One of them looks like Charles" (an elder brother living; we had buried our first-born while an infant, and doubtless his spirit it was that "looked like Charles").

"Don't you see them," he repeatedly persisted, "and can't you hear them sing? Oh! such beautiful music." In all the earnestness of his nature he would look into his mother's eyes and repeat the question: "Ma, don't you see them, and don't you hear their beautiful voices?"

Anxious that his mother could not perceive what was so real to him, he composed himself a little while, seeing and hearing what was so real to him. Suddenly he starts up, turns to his mother and exclaims: "Take me up, take me up, I am as light as a feather, and I'll back on my pillow and expire." In connection with this I will relate a test from him received through an excellent medium in Minneapolis (Mrs. Kelly), some three years afterward. Mrs. Fell had called on Mrs. K., not for a sitting, but as a neighbor, and had no intention of stopping but, at a moment Mrs. K., while seated by and conversing with my wife, and apparently without thinking what she was doing, took my wife's hand in one of hers and pushed the other up my wife's sleeve (the identical act, and the last act of my son as he was dying). I related this incident to Mrs. K., while seated by and conversing with my wife, and apparently without thinking what she was doing, took my wife's hand in one of hers and pushed the other up my wife's sleeve (the identical act, and the last act of my son as he was dying). I related this incident to Mrs. K., while seated by and conversing with my wife, and apparently without thinking what she was doing, took my wife's hand in one of hers and pushed the other up my wife's sleeve (the identical act, and the last act of my son as he was dying). I related this incident to Mrs. K., while seated by and conversing with my wife, and apparently without thinking what she was doing, took my wife's hand in one of hers and pushed the other up my wife's sleeve (the identical act, and the last act of my son as he was dying). 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