

Paradise: he may travel as it were first, second, or third class. If the practice of a full ritual be beyond his means or opportunities, he may fall back on a simpler and, it would seem to us, a more spiritual form of worship; failing in this again he may be saved by hatred of the unbelievers. It is this third and no doubt easier method that once constituted a danger to the Christian world, and ought theoretically even now to make an Anglo-Afghan agreement impossible. To Abdur Rahman the difficulty does not seem even to have presented itself: in the general he exhorts to a most stringent exclusion of infidels and those who consort with them; in the particular he is anxious to share their last rupee, and congratulates his people on a friendship which will bear fruit in the prosperity of the country. Is it cynicism, mere worldly wisdom, that so completely ignores the inconsistency? Miss Hamilton, we are told, found the late Amir something of a sceptic in private, though he was looked upon throughout his dominions as a loyal and sincere Defender of the Faith. We prefer to think of him as having been, like many better men, more sincere than orthodox; or rather to look upon his inconsistency as unconscious, and to take it as a welcome indication that Afghan Mahommedanism is beginning to outgrow its early ferocity; that a religion which at many points approaches Christianity is ceasing, under the influence possibly of the Sultan's envoys and the Mecca pilgrimage, to act, even in Afghanistan, up to its orthodox principles as a propaganda of hatred and exclusiveness. If this faith is really becoming, in any serious degree, a matter of long beards and big turbans on the one hand and of tacitly ignored prohibitions on the other, it must be passing out of the stage of barbarous fanaticism. Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, before he was freed from the Wheel of Things, laid many crimes upon his soul; but he was a mighty ruler of men, and we would gladly believe that he contributed to the progress of the Church as he certainly did to that of the State, in dominions so closely connected with our own.—EDITOR.