

But, so it was, even to the day of the last dying throes of Paganism. Never was the heathen creed, on its *intellectual* side, in a condition so sublimated, as when it perished under the blows of the Christian apologists; but, also, never had its *practical* power, as a religious system, elevating or constraining action, fallen so low as in the days when its votaries were habitually content to deify even monsters in human shape if they wore the imperial purple." A similar state of matters can be seen in our own day. Many of England's aristocracy are now embracing Popery in spite of their high intellectual attainments; and the *Rings* of New York, its defaulters, and defrauders, are men of keen intellect and good education. Education, therefore, of the mere intellect is no solid basis for social order.

The true stability of a people lies in something nobler than force, or law, or knowledge, it lies in pure and undefiled religion, or the cultivation and order in the moral nature of man. If the foundation of society is laid anywhere else but here there is no security, but the social edifice may crumble into ruins under its own weight, or at the first shock of revolution.

There is a feeling abroad, and we meet it in secular as well as in the religious press, that the foundations of modern society are out of joint and becoming more and more unsteady and unsafe. This is what the *Calcutta Statesman* says about India:—

"If we were asked to state the great deficiency in rural Bengal at this moment, we should have to use the phrase of French Conservatives of the day, and to declare that it was the want of moral order. External order has prevailed for years: No thought of rebellion or political riots ever occur in Bengal. Life and property are here as safe as in the most settled countries of Europe. That order which is upheld by the lawyer and the

policeman is supreme and undisturbed; but outside this circle all is chaos and confusion. As an illustration of what we mean, we may refer to the correspondence as to the offences against the marriage law. Complaints under this head used to be made in hundreds; they now come in thousands, and are still on the increase; and not one in fifty leads to a conviction. They are withdrawn, and allowed to fall through, or the magistrate is not satisfied with the evidence. The most experienced officers report that the lower classes are getting so very lax in this respect that they marry and divorce with so little form or publicity that it is almost impossible to afford to husbands the protection aimed at by our law. This is but one instance of the social anarchy which prevails in Bengal. The hold of society over the individual is gone. We have still the rod, the jail, and the gallows, but we have lost that voluntary organization, that power of opinion, that wholesome discipline, which experience shows to be as necessary as the more rough and hard sanctions of Government."

And this is what the *New York Herald* says of our continent in a recent issue:—

"There never was a time when a higher sense of the value of moral and Christian obligations was so necessary as it is now. Our politics are sordid and corrupt, and even business principles are wanting in business men. The teachings of religion and the chidings of conscience seem to have lost their hold upon the hearts of the people. This downward tendency of public and private morality is not only to be deprecated, but, if possible, to be remedied."

It is, therefore, a question of deep interest, as the *Herald* suggests: How this is to be remedied and the foundations of society strengthened.

1. *Let personal holiness be cultivated.*