

opposing systems, not only in the radiant purity of its doctrines, but in its relations to both material and intellectual advancement. Of established and time-honoured iniquities it has ever proved the unrelenting foe. Over the pagan and infidel philosophers, on the one hand, and corruptions of itself on the other, it has triumphed, we may almost say, by the simple operation of the law of contrast. To a certain extent this can be the case no longer. The foe has become an angel of light. He robes himself in the garments of philanthropy. He breathes the spirit of charity in contending for the necessity of progress. He hurls his thunder against many of the real evils of society, and even imports into his system the sublime morality of the gospels. By implication, and to the thoughtless, Christianity is placed in a false position, and in apparent antagonism to its own most cherished principles. Often its advocates, instead of revealing and denouncing the theft, denounce, unwittingly, the truths of their own system, and leave the credit and glory of its victories to its most inveterate antagonists. The fading superstitions of the age meet with no mercy—as, indeed, they deserve none—but the most powerful of all evil agencies—that spirit of speculative worldliness, of real, if not professed materialism, engendered of haste, and pride, and greed—is allowed to pass by unharmed. The batteries of the church are turned in the wrong direction. The slavish superstitions of the past are dying out fast enough under the pressure of their own corruptions, for not only is eternal truth against them, but the very spirit of the age and all the signs of the times. The tinge of the whole unbounded future, the mighty and onreaching destinies of civilization and of man depend on the nature of the system by which these are to be supplanted. Little would be gained by obtaining in exchange the lifeless and frozen forms of a philosophic atheism.

Though we have been led by the aspects of the age to discuss what may be called the *negative* causes of our slowly-moving civilization, we are not disposed to deny that there are positive ones, to which it is more directly attributable. Of these, unfortunately, the name is legion, and to discuss them here, at length, falls within neither our purpose or design. In the first place we would be met with the troublous questions connected with the relations of labor and capital. A passing allusion to these is all that time will allow. To denounce a man as a Chartist or as a Socialist because he prays and labors for the physical elevation of his race, because he deems the inequalities of modern society unnatural and unjust, is a direct libel not only on humanity itself, but on him who filled it with hopes and yearnings for a brighter future. It may be that poverty is not necessarily an evil, that the "simple annals of the poor" are full of the unheralded victories of abiding patience; that the "vision and the faculty divine" hath opened up for them the wondrous wealth and glory of the unseen; that the straying echoes of an untaught lyre have oft become the trumpet voice of a struggling world. Such considerations, however, are but poor arguments to address to the weary and toilsome millions, who are practically excluded from the higher blessings of Christian culture and civilization. Of oppression in its worst and most tyrannic form of enslavement surely we need not speak in this blessed land, the touch of the very hem of whose garment is sufficient to breathe into the sunken spirit of the bondman the throbbing pulses of living liberty. Even from that species of modified servitude which leaving a man nominally free, cripples his energies more effectually than with iron links by the threats of power and the fear of poverty, we are free, as is no other land under the whole canopy of heaven.

We cannot, however, ignore the fact that in other countries—more celebrated and classic, perhaps, than these British Provinces—there is a class who toiling ever can never rise, kept down as by a mill-stone. It may be very true that suffering is a part of the Divine idea for the purifying of the individual man, yet this matter is to so great an extent under human control that no fear need be entertained of passing the limits of human duty.

The history of the past quarter of a century shows with sufficient clearness that relief is not to be found in the triumphs of inventive genius, that these while adding to the strength of him already strong, often tend to render more palpable the weakness of him already weak. Neither is it to be found in systems, however plausible, which are based on a surrender of the most sacred institutes of domestic life, and which exclude men from the light of their

Father's presence and the warmth of their Father's love. The world, after a long process of correction, is reaching the conclusion that here, as elsewhere, true reform cannot be dissociated from those impulses and principles which it is the design of Christianity to produce and foster in the human heart.

Again, look at the war-spirit which is abroad in the world. We never tire of boasting of the superior humanity of the age in which we live, nor of cheap and stereotyped expressions of regret for the millions who have gone down to the shades amid the unspeakable horrors of barbarian warfare; and yet in wide-spread desolation, in the awful aggregate of uncalled-for slaughter, what age has ever equalled ours? We are not speaking of the possible and abstract righteousness of appeals to arms, we prefer to leave the discussion of the question to debating clubs, and that tireless class of moralists who spend their time in seeing if they can

"A hair divide
Betwixt the Nor' and Nor'-west side."

We are speaking of the lamentable fact that on land and sea, in summer and in winter, in realms of ice and in realms of flowers, our fellow men are falling in behalf of enterprises which derive their justification from no higher source than the shadowy and musty dogmas of international law. Better, far better, the bold and unblushing villainy of ancient ambition than the weak and paltry pretexts in which are cloaked the base and lawless purposes of modern greed. In proportion to our reverence of the genius of genuine courage will be our abhorrence of the wars "of these latter days,"—territorial wars, commercial wars, wars of mere aggrandizement. Let all examples of heroic self-devotion gild the annals of our race with glorious and enduring brightness to cheer and succor those who, it may be single-handed, are yet to fight the battles of humanity. Let no word of ours affix a stigma to the memory of the immortal men who sold their lives so dearly in the narrow causeway between Mount Eta and the sea, nor of that most heroic and queenly of historic maidens, who, finding at Rouen at once a martyr's and a patriot's grave, hath put upon the annals of our country a stain which not the splendid line of victories from Malplaquet to Waterloo has been able to efface. All these trumpet-tongued proclaim their eternal protest against the barbarous butcheries which disgrace this nineteenth century.

The charm of chivalry and of knightly prowess disappear when the wide-mouthed cannon usurped the place of the Bayards of the olden time. The plea of necessity no more avails—for in the mighty currents of an intelligent public opinion nations may find a force more effective than the crashing bomb-shell, more terrible than the thunder which clothes the neck of the prancing war-horse. Cherished by nations who profess to reverence Him who pronounced his brightest beatitude on the peace maker; without one redeeming feature, bestial, cruel, and mercenary, the modern war-system will stand out forever before the ages, the most hideous and repulsive monster of history. Its direct efforts, too, are by no means its worst. Manhood stricken down amid life and energy, with which the Creator had endowed it, is calculated to excite our deepest sympathy and provoke our heartiest scorn of the system of which such is the necessary result; but to the eye of the thoughtful and philosophic man there are connected with it evils with which this shrinks from comparison.

When the nation, which should as far as may be, embody and shadow forth those just and generous principles which become the private citizen, herself forgetting the lessons of her own laws, rushes, on the slightest provocation, to the uncertain and unrighteous arbitrament of the sword, the natural tendency is that individual men should become less scrupulous, less tender, less true. Civilization shrinks in the presence of so overshadowing an iniquity. It smites with paralysis the arms of the reformer, and checks the generous and bursting impulses of the philanthropist. It delays the final triumph of Christianity, by placing perpetual stumbling-blocks in the way of its advocates, for, indeed, we think the hardest and most ungracious task that can be imposed on a minister of Christ's peaceful and benevolent Gospel is to pray for the blood-stained Goddess of victory to crown a battle field with her presence, unless men are fighting, and of necessity, in defence of their altars and their homes. Such great systematized wrongs