

*SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.*

The cult of so-called Christian Science (though where either Christianity or science comes in, we fail to see) has been receiving free advertisement of a very malodorous character. As well in Canada as in England and the United States it has come to the front as a sect which, as the result of some of its teachings, is occasionally almost as destructive to the child life of its votaries as was that of the worshippers of Moloch in old time.

In each of the above countries the courts have had to deal with charges of manslaughter arising from the refusal of parents of this ilk to provide necessary medical treatment for their helpless children. In England in the case of *Reg. v. Senior* (1899) 1 Q.B. 283, (which dealt with one of the "Peculiar People" who hold views similar in many respects to the Christian Scientists); in Ontario, in *Rex v. Lewis*, 6 O.L.R. 132; and in the United States, in the case of *People v. Pierson*, recently decided by the New York Court of Appeals.

As our readers have access to the reports of the first two cases we need not take space to refer to them, except to say that the statutory law affecting the matter in England and in Canada is not as comprehensive or as full as in the State of New York. In the case decided there, the prisoner was tried, convicted and sentenced to a fine of \$500 or 500 days imprisonment, for an offence which most parents would consider not far removed from the crime of murder. The conviction was based on a statute which makes it criminal to omit, without lawful excuse, the furnishing of food, clothing, shelter, or medical attendance to a minor. This conviction was sustained by the Court of Appeals. It appears that the prisoner persistently refused to call in a physician or to furnish or administer medicine for an adopted daughter who was suffering from pneumonia. He simply sat by the pain-tortured child and engaged in what he called prayer to, and communion with, the Almighty, without exercising the common sense and common humanity that the Almighty had given him, and deliberately sat there and saw the child die.

The American Court had no difficulties to contend with such as presented themselves in *Rex v. Lewis*, as to whether medical treatment was included in "necessaries," or whether, as in *Reg. v. Senior*, there was "neglect." The general result, however, was the