

24 THE MORAL DANGERS OF THE AGE:

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at Melanesia the martyr-crown was won, but in that public room at Eton !

But our view of life demands other considerations than those that relate to time and personal dishonour. It is a grand thing to live. A thousand times have I blessed God for this great gift of life. But it is very serious also. Life has its *responsibilities*. Influence, like all things else, is imperishable. Nothing perishes. The leaves of autumn do not perish, they enrich the earth. The fuel of our fires sends curling upwards its light smoke, which bears its properties for other uses. The broken fragments of the mountains through torrent and tempest nourish plants and renovate the earth. So, in like manner, not an act you perform, not a word you speak, can wholly perish. It was probably this that Jesus Christ meant when He spoke of the idle words for which we shall give account at the day of judgment : that is, our words which go from us as light as air may be making others better or worse, and their consequences may look us in the face in the judgment. *Sin is imperishable*. Sin, like the soul, has immortality stamped on it : when once done, *it cannot be undone*. Even a saved man's sins are imperishable in the consequences. David, the king of Israel, sinned—alas, how pitilessly ! He repented, and poured out a psalm of contrition that has ever