

place them in the power of merciless creditors?—Christianity. What has protected widows and orphans against injustice,—orphan princes against usurpers and rebellious subjects,—subjects against exaction and oppression.—the weak against the powerful in suits at law,—the goods and the persons of the shipwrecked against plunderers,—and, in short, every description of persons against the distress which would otherwise have overwhelmed them?—Christianity. What has discouraged suicides?—Christianity. The heathens very frequently committed suicide agreeably to their religious or philosophical dogmas; but *no real Christian* can commit this crime, without knowing that he is acting contrary to the principles of the Gospel, committing murder, and clearly violating a divine command. What has discouraged the absurd practice of duels, or deciding doubtful or disputed points by single combat, which obtained so generally in the north and west of Europe?—Christianity. It is true that, from a *false* notion of honour, duels continue to be fought, often for the most frivolous or imaginary affronts; but these are not chargeable to the Gospel, which prohibits murder of every kind: and the men who engage in such duels, shew by their conduct that, though they may *profess and call themselves Christians, they are totally destitute of Christian principle*, and act in utter disregard of the laws of a Christian country (at least of this country) which prohibit them, under severe penalties.*

* By the law of England, where the parties meet with an intent to murder, — (and with what other intent, we may ask, *can* they meet, since challenges are always sent at least one or two days before the duel takes place, so that they meet *deliberately* and with a determination to take each other's lives,—thinking it their duty as *gentlemen*, and claiming it as their right to wanton with their own lives and the lives of others, without any warrant for it either human or divine,) if one party kills the other, it comes within the notion of murder, and is punishable accordingly. So repugnant indeed is our law, that not only the principal who actually kills the other, but also his *seconds*, are guilty of murder, whether they fought or not, and it is held, that the *seconds* of the party slain are likewise guilty as accessories. See Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. 4, page 199. The modern practice of duelling is considered absolutely necessary to protect men from insult; but that it is a mere custom, and unnecessary for that purpose, is evident from the fact, that females, the Christian Societies called Quakers and Unitas Fratrum or United Brethren, and ministers of the Gospel, are scarcely more insulted than the man who will fight. "It is strange," Dr. Ryan remarks, with equal force and justice, "that fighting should be considered a proof of the truth, honor, or honesty of the duellist: a man may possess personal courage without another good quality. The liar, the knave, the seducer of his friend's wife will fight. He who was a villain before he fought, will still be a villain, and, in some cases a greater villain than if he had declined the combat. If a man is so grossly insulted, that his religious principle is not sufficiently strong to support him under the affront, let him challenge the aggressor, form a resolution not to fire, and commit this resolution sealed up to his second. If he *escapes*, let him prosecute at law; if he