

Barabbas-kind, under their fostering care, prospered and increased, and became their utter destruction, as all readers of Josephus well know. The prophets of expediency had dreaded 'lest the Romans come and take away both our place and nation.' Well ! they walked in the light of the sparks they had kindled. The One died for the people, and they rejoiced with their Barabbas whom they had chosen. But such as he were their destruction. The incensed Romans did come after all, 'and take away both their place and nation.' Their nation is no nation. It is nowhere—everywhere; and their holy place affords them only a straitened outer court of wailing and long perpetual tears. 'No portents now our foes amaze,
Forsaken Israel wanders lone;
Our fathers would not know Thy ways,
And Thou hast left them to their own.'

The Romans had next their day of visitation, and were grafted into the olive-tree of God. They were strong lawgivers, framers of discipline and order, civilisers, road-makers, shapers of destiny. 'They did judgment and justice—then it was well with them.' But they fell away; adopted ill customs and gave up good ones. They became greedy, idle, faithless, dissolute, cosmopolitan, effeminate. Their empire rotted at the root, and the freshening northern blasts that should have been its life broke its luxuriant straggling branches. It fell; and great was 'the fall of the Roman Empire.'

But a fresh race, rising since the sunset of Imperial Rome, has peopled the enormous continent of the South, and stretches its sceptre into the solitary northern twilight, and is hailing in allegiance the manifold realm of ancient India.

We English are the greatest of all the races that shall answer for any corner of the earth in the day of judgment. Since our noblest Christian king Alfred sent his ambassadors to the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Christians of the Malabar coast of India it is well-nigh one thousand years.* Little did the good Sighehn and Athelstan dream of the Palestine Survey, and the order of the Star of India, emblazoned on the towering white bows of our colossal troopships, with its high motto, 'Heaven's Light our Guide,' telling of the 'Light that lighteth every man,' except he love the darkness rather than the light.

Why are we this great Imperial People? Because, as Alfred said to his Lord, 'Such laws as we have, and such customs as we have, we took from Thy kingdom.' We have holden by our Lord Christ for a millennium, and He has stood by us and saved us. 'All the days' He has been with us, according to His most sure word of promise. On many a bitter Fast-day of repentance He has stretched out His hand to deliver. In many a bright hour of joy He has shone from His glorious High Throne, with a light above the brightness of the sun. Thrice three times seven years has our revered, beloved Queen drawn her strength and joy from Him. Twenty-one years had she seen when she wedded the Prince of her love. Twenty-one years she leaned on his strong and loyal arm. And the young generation are now of age who were born when a wailing nation laid their benefactor in his grave.

* Precisely one thousand years.—See the *Saxon Chron.* A.D. 883.