

The Commandment: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour' is just as strong to-day as on the day it was written, and our legislation upholds that Commandment by enactments which mete out punishment to the man who bears false witness against his neighbour. But when we come to the Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill,' we have moved an amendment to the effect that the individual shall not kill but the State may kill if it wants to. I have never heard any argument, though I have studied this question a good deal, that convinces me that any man or body of men have the right, or have ever had the right, to enact legislation which will give them the legal right to kill one of their fellowmen. I believe that only He who gave life has the right to take it away. You will say to me at once: what of the man who takes life—should he go unpunished? The man who takes the life of a fellow creature has committed a crime against the human law as well as the Divine law, and, of course, punishment should be meted out to him. But I am arguing on the ground that capital punishment has no divine authority, and I question the right of any man, from the moral standpoint, to enact legislation which enables him to contravene that commandment which is old, yet ever new: 'Thou shalt not kill.' Are we not in legislation of this kind adhering strictly to the old law which was enacted and enforced by our forefathers in the time when they were, as we, at least, contend, not up to our standard of civilization and education? The world moves, and we should move with it. In applying capital punishment to a fellow-being I cannot see that we are applying to him any law different from that which we apply to the lower animals. In the various provinces we have legislative enactments providing that certain animals can be slaughtered if they commit certain depredations, and it cannot be said that we are not applying the same law to our fellow-beings when we say: If a man commits a certain depredation, kill him. I challenge any one to submit any divine authority for such an action. I feel very strongly on this matter; my convictions are not of the moment, I have held them all my life, and have given the matter some study. Some years ago when I was in the legislature of the province of Ontario, I had occasion to look into the statistics, some of which have been submitted by my hon. friend the member for Montreal (Mr. Bickerdike) to-day. I convinced myself then—I cannot bring the

figures to my mind at the present time—that in every State of the Union wherein capital punishment had been abolished, the benefits were clearly evident, and crime of murder had not increased. A comparison has been made here to-day of crime in the Maritime provinces and crime in the state of Maine. I submit that that is not a fair comparison. In the state of Maine the law is not recent, but if you take any of the States of the Union wherein capital punishment has been abolished in recent years, and compare the criminal conditions during a term of years before capital punishment was abolished with conditions during a period of years afterward, and the benefit that has resulted will be readily observed.

Mr. PELLETIER: How does the hon. gentleman explain that?

Mr. GRAHAM: Men are improving every day, and although we have the old enactment, if I may so call it, of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' and 'whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' these principles are giving way to the new thought of a new era. The men of to-day are inclined to be influenced by the Sermon on the Mount, rather than by the old ethics of many centuries ago. The improved condition is brought about by the education and treatment of the man, by his being uplifted through moral influences, and by that which to my mind is fully as strong—the human touch and the human sympathy of his fellow beings, which enables every man, in a measure at least, to look upon his fellow man as a friend and not as an enemy. In years gone by the entire world was much interested in the erection of great monuments to men whose valour had been proven on fields of battle—and great men they were. But that age is rapidly passing away, and in the years to come monuments will be erected to men, not because of deeds of valour they performed in slaying their fellow men, but because of their deeds of kindness and the good they did to their fellow beings as they went through life. I am fully convinced—and hon. gentlemen will, I am sure, all agree with me in this—that the supreme duty of every human being—particularly those in this House, in the legislative halls of the world, and in the highest walks of life, ought to be to leave the world somewhat better because of their having lived in it, and anything that tends to that end