

surrounding their temples. The base contempt for infant life exhibited by all ancient nations is a dark stain on their historial records.

Perhaps no nation of ancient times was so unrelenting in the practice of infanticide and abortion as the Romans. The law gave to the Roman father, the supreme power over the life of his offspring. In the 301st year of Rome, the law of the Twelve Tables was enacted, which confirmed their rights, giving a Roman father unqualified jurisdiction over the lives of his children, even after they had arrived at years of maturity. In the early history of Rome, this right was seldom exercised, but as luxury increased in one portion of the community and poverty and depravity in the other, so did crime of this nature increase. To so great an extent was abortion, and exposure of new born infants practised under the Empire, that the Christian writers of those days express themselves with boldness touching these crimes, and at length prevailed under the Christian emperor Constantine, to oppose by law the exposure and murder of infants. Thus Rome at the period of her grandeur and greatest political success, when she called all outsiders barbarian, was herself afflicted with a plague-spot of the deepest dye, exhibited in her base and brutal contempt of infant life, her indifference to the care and nurture of her own offspring. I need not particularize the customs of other ancient nations, the sickening records of which are to be found scattered throughout the history of those times. On our own continent human sacrifice has been a custom practised by almost every tribe. The Mexicans, Peruvians and some tribes in Chili were addicted to the sacrifice of their own children. A Peruvian father if taken ill sacrificed his child to the Sun, beseeching him to accept the life offered and spare his own. In the northern continent infanticide and abortion were occasionally practised by the natives of Labrador, and in the neighborhood of Hudson's Bay, but all authorities bear testimony to the care and tender treatment of their young by the North American tribes. Sir John Franklin states that infanticide is of rare occurrence among the Indian tribes; they regarded it as a great crime, punishable in a future state. Women who had been guilty of infanticide never reached the Indian heaven, but were compelled to all eternity to hover round the place where the crime was committed, with branches of trees tied round their legs. The neglect of the care and nurture of the young is not confined to the records of the past, the practice has descended to our own time. I need not enter upon the sad details of Chinese travellers who all agree in the general prevalence of infanticide among that nation; of Bishop Heber's narrative on the same subject in Upper India; of the testimony of the various missionaries in the South Sea Islands, nor of Admiral Slade as regards the practice amongst the Turks; nor is it necessary to touch (except cursorily) on the moral depravity prevailing and gaining ground in the most enlightened communities, where hints to married men or those contemplating marriage, are published with unblushing impudence in the daily papers. So common are the advertisements of professed abortionists, and those who endeavour to mislead their dupes into believing that they possess the secret of preventing conception, at will, that recently in the city of New York the medical profession held a public meeting with a view of arresting the evil by the strong arm of the law. Abortion has of late become so common a practice in Great