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## ALL THE WORLD OVER.

"I must have liberty,  
Withal as large a charter as the wind—  
To blow on whom I please."

THE "Purification of the Press" is one of the latest additions to the realms of "leagueism," if the coinage be excusable. To San Francisco belongs the honor of initiating this goody-goody fraternity. Nominally, the protest is against the salacious disposition which "modern metropolitan journalism" displays in the performance of its functions as an institution for the collection and dissemination of news, but in reality it was a spontaneous uprising of that dissatisfaction with the general character of the newspaper press of to-day which is abroad among the body of the people. In so far as it found direct expression the protest of the women was against the earnestness with which the press catered to the depraved instincts of the coarser elements of society by the elaborate way in which it exploited every passing event in which the laws of cleanly human nature and decent conduct were violated. That constituted a phase of the matter into which refined womanhood felt that it could project itself without laying itself open to a charge of interfering with affairs which it did not understand and which did not concern it. When the press invaded the home with the concerns of the brothel, the bar room, the prize ring, the assignation house, and the abortionists' den, the wives and mothers and daughters of the community, a San Francisco exchange asserts, felt that they had a right to be heard in protest, for the home is the woman's kingdom. That constitutes the reason

why the protest in question was so limited in its scope.

The Protestants designedly confined themselves to questions upon which they not only merely had a right to speak, but upon which their *ipse dixit* must be accepted as conclusive. They said in a distinct though modest voice that "modern metropolitan journalism" was performing its functions in a manner which was offensive to decency and a menace to good morals; and they appealed, by petition to the publishers and "men of letters" who are responsible for this condition of journalism to abate the nuisance they were creating. These women did not threaten or seek to coerce; they petitioned and prayed; they appealed to a thing that does not exist—the conscience of "modern metropolitan journalism"—and the appeal was unheeded.

Its members would have nothing appear in the columns of a newspaper which could by any stretch of imagination be considered as offensive. And now, my friends, though laudable your exertions, your object can never be attained. The press is what the people make it, and if nobody did anything wrong or naughty, nothing wrong nor naughty could appear in the newspapers. The league, and there is talk of establishing a branch in Victoria, would bring about many very desirable changes. "They would, if they could, but they can't," as a worthy friend puts it.

They'd banish the darkness and substitute light.

They would if they could, but they can't; None would be crooked, but all be upright.

They would if they could, but they can't; They'd do unto others as they'd be done by.

Though they wouldn't be perfect, they'd try. Ah, they'd try.

And live down below, as they live up on high— They would if they could, but they can't.

The boys and the girls they'd keep far apart. They would if they could, but they can't.

And love they'd have reign in the head, not the heart.

They would if they could, but they can't; They'd speak in a tumult and all would be peace.

A word, and the storms and tempest would cease.

The quack would no longer the ailing ones fleece—

They would if they could, but they can't.

They'd tell unto others the things they should do.

They would if they could, but they can't, They'd rule public morals and newspapers, too.

They would if they could, but they can't; They'd make of this world a paradise pure.

All would be wealthy—none would be poor. "Chance" they'd discard, the word would be "sure."

They would if they could, but they can't.

No matter what the outcome of the efforts of the League may be, there is an amusing phase of newspaper ethics

in Victoria which I would refer to. I mean the exhibitions of personal temper or party spleen that are made in the columns of the daily newspapers as well as upon the floors of the House and the political platform. One can excuse very much that occurs in the two more exciting arenas; but what must one think when he finds editorial writers deliberately and, it may be said, with malice prepense going to work and abusing each other in the choicest literary Billingsgate, scarcely condescending to anything so natural as argument; but styling each other liars, scoundrels and abandoned characters of the worst description. None of this serves for the purposes of edification or of accomplishing a legitimate object, all it does being to further lacerate already wounded feelings and to make people think that were their physical developments at all on a par with the prowess of their pens what fine fellows these editors would be were they only backed against each other in a pugilistic controversy.

No real advantage can possibly be gained by this method of advancing party politics. In fact it is altogether beneath men of fine feelings, and its exponents never fail to be sized up to their individual as well as party disadvantage by friend and foe alike. There is no need to specify instances of the kind referred to. They are as thick as leaves in Val' Ambrossa, and the sooner steps are retraced into the good old ways the better. In former times, when these politicians and public writers claimed to be gentlemen, the *code d'honneur* intervened when the bounds had been transgressed. Now, the libel law has to be invoked, and no wonder that under such conditions as now obtain its provisions should be of the strictest. Still behind it some of the most cruel and, indeed, mortifying wounds are inflicted by those who flatter themselves that they are many men.

There are but few—no matter how little they may affect to care for these things—who can fail, when we think for a moment, to be impressed by the events which at this season are being celebrated in the religious world. Still, on matters like this, it is impossible to think that for more than eighteen centuries the vast majority of those who may be termed the civilized world have lived and died believing in a lie. Moreover, many of those whom one is accustomed to regard as outside the religious pale have their traditions and their beliefs which in many respects resemble those of the Christians. Indeed, as St. Paul said, the unknown God is not so far from every one of us—a fact which was demonstrated in a wonderful way in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago last year.