

this is to be a nation of atheists, I believe it will witness scenes which I would that my eyes should be closed in death rather than behold.

Thus the loss of popular respect for Religion is the dry-rot of social institutions. In society as in everything else there is a law of strength and a law of weakness, a law of progress and a law of decay. The idea of God as the Creator and Father of all mankind, is in the moral world what gravitation is in the natural—it holds all together, and causes them to revolve around a common centre. Take this away, and instantly men drop apart: there is no such thing as collective humanity, but only separate molecules, with no more cohesion than so many grains of sand. Man has no tie to bind him to anything in heaven or earth—no Father above and no brother here, with no end in existence but to seek the infinitesimal interest of the atom he calls himself. When society is thus separated into atoms, it will speedily crumble to pieces; and so your crusade against Religion must end at last in Nihilism, which aims to destroy Religion and Society together.

Perhaps you are not disturbed at the prospect. Some reformers would like to see the earth swept clean and bare before they undertake to construct upon it the fabric of their new civilization. Well, if their philosophy be carried out, they will have their wish: the earth will be again without form and void, and darkness will be upon the face of the deep; or, to be more exact, we shall have something like a recurrence of that Glacial Epoch of which geologists tell us, when the earth was bound in masses of ice miles in thickness, which, as they began to stir, ground the rugged faces of the mountains into the smooth cliffs which we see to-day, and destroyed all animal and vegetable life on the globe.

Is this an extravagant figure to apply to the moral state of the world, when you have destroyed Religion and all the institutions founded upon it, with the Art and the Literature of which it is so large an element? Nor does that end your task, for you must destroy History also—a work which you will gladly undertake, since you tell me that "all history is a lie." When you have cleared away all this rubbish, then indeed the earth will be bare and flat enough for that mighty Tower of Babel which you are going to build upon it, and to build so high that its top shall reach heaven. But those

who undertook that task before came to grief, and such may be your fate. When you have overturned everything that belongs to the past, and utterly discredited the history of the human race, it may be that you will find that you have only turned back the shadow on the dial of the world.

WHAT HAS CHRISTIANITY DONE FOR SOCIETY?

At this point you may turn suddenly and sharply, and ask, What has Christianity done to relieve social inequality, and the injustice which pervades the institutions of society? Little enough, I confess, compared with what it ought to have done, although pretty much all that has been done has been by its inspiration. It was the first to establish the doctrine of human rights on this sure foundation, that all men are the creatures of one God, children of a common Father. Man's worth lies not in rank, which belongs to a few, but in the soul, which belongs to every human being, the poorest and the humblest. This makes humanity sacred. No ruler, however great, has a right to tyrannize over it. This conviction in the hearts of Wilberforce and Clarkson put an end to the slave trade, and finally banished slavery itself from the British Empire; and in every age, and all over the world, it has been the inspiration of innumerable struggles for liberty.

To the same inspiration are due the institutions devoted to the relief of human suffering. Count up those within the limit of a single city—the asylums, the hospitals, and the hundred minor charities, which reach out unseen hands to the dwellings of the poor, relieving poverty and sickness, and every form of misery—how many of these would live through a single Winter without the active support of Christian men and women?

AN ILLUSTRATION AT YOUR OWN DOOR.

Here is an illustration at your own door. You have lately removed your residence to New York—the great city which attracts to itself distinguished talent of every kind. As you take your morning walk down town, in going from the Fifth avenue to Union square, you may pass through Fifteenth street, where you will see a massive building, over the arched portal of which is chiselled in the red sand-stone, YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION. This is designed especially for the benefit of young women who come to the city to