

The objects of this little band of so-called "fanatics," incorrigible heretics, were not bound up and fenced in by creeds. The foundation of Quakerism was for an organization without creed, without dogma. It was a pure democracy. It was from the Quaker that England learned her first lessons in democracy. All men were equal before God and law. Caste was to be annihilated. Monopolies founded in social rank were to be overthrown, and religion purified.

The Puritan battled against the English church to obtain religious liberty. The Quaker fought for toleration and liberty of conscience. Both were for reform. What was the difference? Both fled to America to escape English law and religious oppression. But did not the Puritan set up a theocracy of his own? Did he not, in the face of English law, pass acts of uniformity? Did he show toleration to Baptist, Papist, or Quaker? The history of Massachusetts furnishes a sad comment upon the wisdom of her founders. She has paid the penalty, and though there is not a state in the Union where thought is more free or liberty of conscience more pure, yet let her not forget, whatever apology may be offered, that to this heretic and fanatic whom she exiled, this Quaker whom she whipped and flogged, this Quaker whom she imprisoned and hanged, is due much of the happiness, prosperity, and advancement she now enjoys.

To-day the influence of Quakerism is felt throughout the state. The theocracy of the Puritans, where is it? the democracy of the Quakers, where is it not? We may boast of the honesty and devotion of our forefathers, and glossing their intolerance and fanaticism, point with just pride to their stern morality; but the idea for which they lived and for which they were willing to die, is repudiated by their children.

We may call the Quakers meddlers and intruders; we may give prominence to the acts of Lydia Wardwell; we

may laugh at the broken bottles of Thomas Moorhouse, and sneer at the sackcloth of Mary Brewster; preferring to judge the little army of Quakers by these exceptional cases, forgetting the purity of their lives, the sublime heroism of their devotion, we may curse them for a set of fanatics and madmen, but the truth remains and will prevail, the Quakers were the pioneers of religious liberty, and their thought, the idea for which they lived, suffered and died, is the inspiration of our present civilization.

"There are those who take note that their numbers are small,
New Gibbons, who write their decline and their fall,
But the Lord of the Sea-Field takes care of his own,
And the world shall yet reap what their sowers have sown."

It was not alone in the religious world that the influence of the Quakers was felt; the whole world, religious, social and political, has almost universally accepted and adopted their theories. They organized to consider practical rather than speculative questions, questions of moral rather than questions of theology; but no subject that concerned the public welfare was excluded from their attention. "The whole world was their home, and to do good was their mission." Their aims were to inspire in one another a purpose to lead a new and pure life, a life consecrated to humanity, to the deliverance of the human race from ignorance, superstition and sin; and if possible, to persuade all mankind to dwell together as one brotherhood, in peace, order and love.

Opposed to religious doctrines and pedantic creeds, the Quaker sought their downfall. Opposed to tithes, he refused their payment for the same reasons that Parliament and the people of England urged the abolition of the "Star Chamber" and the Courts of High Commission in the reign of Charles I.

No sect has ever identified itself with purely philanthropic causes in the way