

easily ruled, and readily submits to a tyranny. In fact, the multitude have no idea of liberty. Make the mass free, and they proceed to erect a tyrant over them—either a king or a wire-puller or an organization, with as much persistency as the Jews set up idols as fast as they were destroyed. Dear to the average man is his calf, and it does not need to be of gold. The burden of personal identity, of complete self-reliance, is too great for most men to bear, just as to think consecutively on one subject for five minutes would be for the average man worse torture than to suffer suspension by the ears from tenter hooks for the same time."

"I remember," I said, "Coleridge makes a remark something like that in his 'Table Talk,' or is it in his 'Aids to Reflection'?"

McKnom: "I don't care who says it, it is true."

The Senator: "But, will not the multitude run after mere position, apart from mercenary motives altogether? Don't you remember Greville's remark on William IV. just after he became king, that he seemed a good kind of man who had, for sixty-four years, gone through town and country unnoticed, but who now could not stir but he was mobbed by enthusiastic crowds, not merely plebian, but aristocratic?"

McKnom: "Yes, man is naturally an idolator and slave. But what is provoking about him is that while he readily admires mean things and submits to base authority, he resents genuine authority such as truth and mental power give."

"Just as," I remarked, "the Jews turned away from the living God—from the divine, to idols of wood and stone."

McKnom: "Precisely."

The Senator: "But is there not, Mr. McKnom, an inconsistency in your teaching? You have been laying it down that the archaic man—the ruler—is born and not made; that he has qualities which naturally assert command, and challenge obedience and following; and now you tell us how men will readily submit to, cringe, flatter, follow those who have none of these qualities."

McKnom: "Let me take the illustration of my friend here—Jehovah and Israel. When did Israel turn away from their God, their strength, their deliverer? Was it not when there was little danger, and they were full of bread and prosperous, and their foolish hearts were darkened, and grossly desired some visible symbol of divinity? In piping times of peace the intellectual poplar, the moral basswood, clothed with the insignia of power, that is enough for the coarse-hearted crowd; but let dangers arise, and then, fear purifying heart and vision, they will, like Israel to Jehovah, turn to the born ruler. Besides, there is something you forget. We live in a democratic country, in which, of course, one main postulate of life is that all men are equal. It is a blasphemous lie—a denial of God. Has God made all the stars the same size? Nay, the Apostle tells us that one star differs from another in glory. Men can be equal before the law, but absolutely equal they cannot be and, as a fact, are not. A community of moral and intellectual beings absolutely equal could not exist; it would perish in internecine strife; it would afford no scope for the noblest human virtues; love could not bloom in its desert and dreary monotony, and the efforts of the intellect would be abortive or utterly barren. But still we declare we are all equal; we are all lords and gentlemen and ladies of high degree; all intellectual powers; and though we have a dim idea we are not all artists—and therefore heartily despise the artist, whether of brush or pen or tongue—yet we believe we are all statesmen—all of us equal, at a moment's notice to govern a kingdom—to govern this great Dominion. Don't you see that if we look out for men of exceptional intellectual eminence to govern us, we admit that we ourselves are not fit to govern; and this would deal a deadly blow to our smug, silly, recking vanity."

The Senator: "You have certainly put your point very strongly. You dare not utter such sentiments if you were a politician. Then you would have to flatter the multitude. 'Free and independent,' you know. Ha, ha!"

"It is not," I said, "only the multitude. Don't you remember what Dean Swift makes one of his characters write to a Minister of the Crown: 'If I do not get a colonelcy for myself and a company for my son, I'm d— if I don't vote according to my conscience.' But I have had men say to myself that unless they got a certain thing they would never cast a Conservative vote again; though I am happy to say it was not in my own constituency."

McKnom: "Sad, unutterably sad, it is to think of the paltry per centage of the voters who realize their privilege or are worthy of the franchise. Closely connected with that grossness of heart of which I have been speaking is the despair of capacity which belongs to the multitude—learned and unlearned. Thus during Sir John Macdonald's time it was thought if he went nobody could fill the bill. But, who would have thought that the man to successfully lead the Conservative hosts would be found in one who had comparatively little training?"

The Senator: "I remember what was said when he took the Premiership by those who are enthusiastic now."

McKnom: "Another result of this grossness of heart—this want of discernment—is that a blight falls on the growth of great men. 'I am inclined,' says de Tocqueville, speaking of America, 'to attribute the singular paucity of distinguished political characters to the ever-

increasing activity of the despotism of the majority.' Worse than the despotism of a few, or even of one, and he says elsewhere: 'Democratic republics extend the practice of currying favour with the many.' Again: 'In the immense crowds which throng the avenues of power in the United States I found very few men who displayed any of that manly candour and masculine independence of opinion which frequently distinguished the Americans of former times, and which constitutes the leading features in distinguished characters, wherever they may be found.' And once again: 'I hold it to be an impious and an execrable maxim that, politically speaking, a people has a right to do whatsoever it pleases. . . . When I see that the right and means of absolute command are conferred on a people, or upon a king, upon an aristocracy or a democracy, a monarchy or a republic, I recognize the germ tyranny.'

The Senator: "Does it not come to this, that, as old Sir John said, man must be governed by force or fraud?"

"I knew Sir John well," I remarked, "but never knew him to lay down so vile a proposition."

McKnom: "It is only true of a degraded people. A free people, free in soul as in civil condition, can be governed by thought—by law—by mind without passion—the highest state of man. But men abuse everything. Witness the press, once the shield of liberty, now itself often an unscrupulous tyrant; and though popular government is but of yesterday, yet already men have learned to reconcile the form and methods of self-government with real despotism, and the evils which belong to courts—the intrigue, the nepotism, the exaltation of incapacity and incompetence, the strangulation of the popular will, the dissipation of public wealth, sudden fortunes founded in infamy and raised by fraud—reappear where there are neither crowns nor thrones."

"Do you not think," I asked, "that defective logical faculty is often as much the cause of the folly of the people as the grossness of heart of which you speak?"

McKnom: "Quite as often, and its aberrations frequently take an amiable form, namely, reasoning from private decorum to public capacity. England has had asses in the highest positions, and you will remember that when Spencer Perceval was Prime Minister and his incapacity was pointed out, his friends replied that he was a good father and a faithful husband. The answer was obvious, that a good father and a faithful husband might be, and in fact, in his case, was, a bad statesman, and the Rev. Sidney Smith wittily said he would prefer he was unfaithful to Mrs. Perceval and whipt the little Percevals if he saved his country. I heard last Sunday the Rev. Mr. Gorman preach at Grace Church, and he fell into the fallacy that there is some connection between social virtue and talents for public service, and he mentioned with approval the act of the Athenians in giving the command of the Sicilian expedition to Nicias and not to Alcibiades. Nicias was a man of correct life; Alcibiades a profligate; but Nicias was a bad general and Alcibiades was a good one and a man of genius. It was a dreadful dilemma. But there can be no doubt the wiser course was to have given the command to Alcibiades, that is, if the expedition was to be undertaken at all. It would have been a good job for the Athenians if Nicias, instead of being a respectable citizen, had been an abandoned man, because then his virtues would not have imposed on their judgment to trust their fate and the fate of their empire to his incapacity. I say the Athenians were in a grave dilemma, because in a man of genius we pardon weakness, not vice, and Alcibiades was vicious."

"Does not this," I asked, "raise the whole question how far private character is in issue in public life?"

McKnom: "Logically speaking, no account should be taken of it, unless so far as it enhances or injures the public qualification."

"I think a politician should live more correctly than a bishop, if he is to be at peace."

McKnom (joining the Senator in a laugh): "Yes, for the bishop's frock will cover them. If we lived ninety years ago, or thereabouts, we might regret the relations of Nelson with Lady Hamilton and condemn him for his cruelty to his wife, but it would be madness not to use the hero to win Copenhagen, the Nile—Trafalgar. And Wellington in the Peninsula was guilty of even worse conduct, but should we have been wise to have deprived of command the future hero of Waterloo? But a public man must not obtrude vice so as to ask us to openly condone it. Nor even weaknesses. We have no right, however, to follow him to his hearth. Have you (turning to me) sent notes of our conversations to Madame Lalage?"

"Yes."

"Then let us meet at her place on Saturday night, and I will take up this subject of the weaknesses of the archaic man."

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

BETWEEN the ages of twenty and forty, prisoners die of consumption much more rapidly than people outside of confinement; but whether this is owing to the confinement or to the previous lives of the convict is not clear. Few criminals of any kind live to be old men.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

THE cold in a cavern in France is so great, no matter how warm the external atmosphere may be, the visitor cannot prolong his stay without inconvenience unless wrapped in winter clothing. There are not less than a score of these natural ice houses in France, and probably half as many in Italy.—Philadelphia Ledger.

THE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT.

I CROSSED the market-place of death,
The shambles-place of shame and night,
The mists came down and caught my breath,
A shadow floated by my side,
"Where are the true of heart," I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

I heard the iron roar of hate,
The under-throb of miseries throe,
I felt the biting frosts of fate
Across the moors of human woe;
I saw sad phantoms come and go,
That shadow still moved at my side,
Across the mad throb of the night,
"Where are the holy ones," I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

I saw strange deeds of evil dooms,
And knew mid haunts of human strife,
Pale phantoms worn at sorrow's looms,
Weaving the spectre webs of life;
Lone, hungry eyes on every side,
Haunting the streets of evil blight,
"Where are the morning hearts!" I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

I saw youth use its strength for lust,
I saw age hideous in its woe,
God's angels groping in the dust,
For bestial baubles, past me go.
I heard the sons of darkness vaunt
Their brutal strength in hellish glee,
I saw the withered face of want
Go past with haggard misery.
Great, towering greed with power did ride,
With law and force to left and right,
"Where are the true of heart?" I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

Above the misery and the sin,
The loves and hates, the hopes and fears,
That great, sad market-place within,
A sweet, weird music filled mine ears.
It was the magic lute of life,
Played by some sorcerer divine,
That whirled my senses to sweet strife,
And set my blood like running wine;
Till all that place a wonder turned,
The agony, the love-drawn breath,
Into mine inmost senses burned,
The ecstasy of life and death.
The laugh, the tear, the love that sighed,
Came through the murk-mists of the night,
"Where are the holy ones?" I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

Poor innocence all clothed in rags,
Sat blinking in the market-place,
Cant and hypocrisy, two hags,
Went by with mock of holy face;
Sect strove with sect across the dark,
And juggled for securer place,
Each cried, "Ours only is the ark,
We only know God face to face."
A myriad jargon voices hissed,
"The truth ye seek is here or here,"
And over above them in the mist,
In purple gleam of amethyst,
The dread word "self" was written clear.
The whole world's ill moaned at my side,
All my shrunk soul was filled with night,
And to the great, dread dark I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

Where are the holier ones of old?
The high priests of the days of yore,
Who never schemed nor bought nor sold
With precious jewels of God's lore;
Where are the gentle and austere,
The children of the ages' youth,
The souls like brooklets running clear,
With music of the world's glad truth;
Where are the warriors of to-day,
The strong-armed batlers for the right,
The smiters of the evil way,
"Where are the children of the light?"

"O spirits of the dark," I cried,
"O good or evil, if you hear,
Where do the true and faithful bide,
Where are the holy and sincere?"
All sin and weakness soul can dream,
In this dread market-place I see,
And nothing hidden in its gleam,
But hath its counterpart in me.
Lord of the blackness, we are naught
But dust-motes blown across the dark,
Where are the ones our hearts have sought?
Where are the keepers of the ark?
Where do the mighty spirits bide
Who see across the mists of night?
"Where are the morning hearts?" I cried,
"Where are the children of the light?"

Ottawa. WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL.