

(Continued from First Page.)

completely in behalf of dominant partizan interests, while individual moral convictions, in opposition to the public, being relatively feeble in their influence on the public, and more or less under its ban, are under the influence of countless direct and immediate personal inducements to suppression, and are therefore more reliable as being the result of honest, disinterested thought. Now just as long as the public in any of the above mentioned ways interferes with the indefeasible, God given rights of the individual, just so long will there be war in the social camp of humanity; because, if the public is the great conservator of all the social forces of civilization, it is no less true that the individual is the true and Divinely appointed pioneer to scale the works of conservative foggism of whatever kind, whether that foggism be political or religious or simply the foggism of unorganized popular opinion. The individual is the true pioneer to lead the forlorn hope to the assault on all the strongholds of conceited ignorance, superstition, bigotry, and intolerance, as well as on those of arrogant, tyrannical, overbearing, and oppressive selfishness.

Now the principles of justice indicated in the foregoing propositions, are violated every day and with apparently perfect impunity. Nay, the authors of these violations absolutely revel and run riot in the exuberance of their triumph over their hapless and suffering victims. They perpetrate their outrages against these dearest and most sacred rights of man in all the varied forms in which the influence of the more powerful is brought to bear upon the weaker portions of the community. Nearly every civil law carries more or less of injustice and oppression with it. Nearly every ecclesiastical law is as full of it as ever was caput full of nameless parasites. Every crude and unrighteous popular sentiment is as full of it as ever was that burning lake full of sulphurous fire and smoke. In nineteen cases out of twenty we may find more or less of oppression and danger in the civil laws.

The autocrat fills his purse out of the pockets of his subject slaves. The dominant caste tramples on all inferior castes. The powerful race or nation rides rough shod over the rights and interests of the weaker ones. The dominant political party disregards the rights and interests of the weaker ones as much as it can and dare. The political ring cabals and intrigues for the passage of unjust laws. If now we turn from the civil to the religious government of the world, we find the same unrighteous influences at work. Sect wars against sect. All religions endeavor to exterminate all others, and all religions alike grossly outrage human rights in their attempts to coerce human beliefs and human conduct. The amount of pressure put upon human belief and human conduct, is always exactly proportioned to the amount of power possessed. When the arm of the civil law is under its control, its tyranny is perfectly destructive to human intelligence. When it has less power it is less injurious. But still in all countries and in all ages, its power, whatever may be its beneficial influences, which we are not here considering, is fearfully injurious to the rights and interests of mankind. Men are naturally cowards. Their opinions are forced upon them as mere echoes of the popular opinions around them. Few men have the intellectual conviction and the moral and physical courage necessary to stand up in defence of their own internal convictions against the weight of an unanimous public opinion, or harder still, against their own pecuniary and social interests. Their most cherished internal convictions are absolutely crushed out of them. The process of social ostracism in the absence of power, to execute more violent measures is carried to such an extreme length that very few men have the power successfully to resist it, and the consequence is, that ignorant and interested demagogues whether political or religious, ride triumphant over ignored and unpopular brains. Hence it follows that while the initial work in all human progress is necessarily essentially destructive, none but the strongest are capable of it because they are opposed by the weight of a more or less unanimous public opinion which is the

strongest of all the social forces. This force is applied in every possible way. The reformer is ignored; he is ridiculed; he is aspersed; obstacles are thrown in his way; his voice and his influence is in every way cut off in order that blind and stolid ignorance and arrogant selfishness, may carry off all the laurels, and all the spoils of victory, while sacred truth and righteousness lie bleeding and helpless, and weltering in the ditch and mire of despair. In such a condition of things—and such is the universal condition of things—brains do not rule as they always should, but simple shallow noise and vaporing and arrogant intriguing and self-interest. The demagogue whether political or religious, or of any other stamp, who can make the most noise and bluster, carries the crowd, because they are too ignorant and interested to resist him. In such cases brains are always the martyrs to shallow ignorance, blind bigotry, intolerance, and arrogant selfishness. Such in brief outline is the general condition of human society, and there is no remedy for it but increasing intelligence and high moral courage. The truest of all men is he who has the moral courage, under all proper circumstances and on all proper occasions, modestly and courteously, but firmly to assert his most internal convictions. True if he be ignorant and uncultured he may do considerable injury, but this is better than dishonesty and hypocrisy. But when the mind is irradiated with far reaching and comprehensive intelligence, and at the same time under the control of the highest order of conscience, other things being equal, such is the man who will move the world in the direction of real progress without any sham. Such is the stuff out of which are made all true reformers, the world's greatest benefactors, and such are the men who will tear down the strong holds of ignorance, superstition, bigotry, fanaticism, and intolerance, and all the forms of social and moral corruption that infest human society.

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