

For the Torch of Reason.

A Bad Lot.

BY D. PRIESTLEY.

Mr. Moody, while talking to the inmates of the Colorado state prison, said:

"We are naturally bad, the whole crowd of us. The first man born of woman was a murderer. Sin leaped into the world full grown, and the whole race has been bad ever since."

After Mr. Moody had delivered himself of the above glad tidings of great joy, he told the convicts that he held in his hand a pardon for one of them, from the governor. Of course there was great excitement as to who it was for. It was for one of the women. When she received it she buried her face in the nurse's lap and wept, and the account says that nearly all the prisoners shed tears.

They were rejoiced, not that they were free, but that another person was free. That was disinterested benevolence, and showed the utter falsity of Mr. Moody's creed. That creed evidently does not fit the Colorado penitentiary. It would be better adapted to some cannibal island.

Compare those ninety and nine convicts shedding tears of joy over one sinner who was to escape, with a person who expects to escape an eternal prison by turning state's evidence—a man who began to commit crime six thousand years before he was born.

Mr. Moody says, "The first man born of woman was a murderer." That's it—"born of woman"! It is so much better to be made of dirt. But, after all, according to the inspired fable, it was religion that caused the first murder. It was a quarrel between Cain and Abel as to which God liked best, mutton or garden truck. They were fire-worshippers. Paul said, "Our god is a consuming fire." Abel's mutton-fat would burn (the god would receive it), but the cabbage which Cain brought would not burn.

Mr. Moody says the whole race has been bad ever since. A man who has had father, mother, brothers, sisters, wife, friends and neighbors, who has experienced all the endearments of love and friendship, and then can pronounce such a verdict as that upon those who have loaded him with blessings a thousand times beyond his merits, furnishes the nearest approximation to total depravity which it is possible for an unregenerate sinner to imagine. The man who, like Whittier, tries to take the old creed under protest, saying,

"But still my human hands are weak
To hold your iron creeds;
Against the word you bid me speak
My heart within me bleeds";

or like Albert Barnes, who exclaims, "It is all dark, dark to my soul!" is entitled to sympathy. But

surely the man who can take that creed and profess to like it, has something the matter with his brains, or else he is merely preaching and does not expect to be taken seriously.

Newberg, Ore.

Mrs. Stanton on Mrs. Place.

It is asked why women should be exempt from capital punishment. Because they have no voice in the laws, no representation in the government. This is a "male oligarchy." Men make the laws and compel women to abide by them. Men decide what deeds are criminal, drag women into their courts to be tried by juries of men, advocates men, judges men, imprisoned and watched by men, their heads shaved, dress adjusted, strapped in the chair for electrocution by men, in the presence of men, without a word to say as to the law or its execution.

I am opposed to the death penalty in any form, for men or women, but the fact that woman has no voice in the laws, no representation in the government, makes her as helpless as dogs or cats in the hands of the vivisectionists, outside the realm of justice and mercy. What a picture is presented us at this time for contemplation. The great state of New York on one side and an ignorant, unbalanced and half crazy woman on the other, about to suffer the death penalty for a horrible crime which no sane person could possibly perpetrate.

For the protection of society she must be punished, but let her sentence be commuted to lifelong imprisonment. Such criminals as Mrs. Place, now doomed to death, must be deprived of their liberty, but capital punishment is a barbarism unworthy this stage of our development and a disgrace to the Christianity and civilization of the nineteenth century. The paraphernalia of death by electricity is more harrowing in its details than the gallows, and both are revolting to the moral sense of the community. There is a sentiment of tenderness and compassion in the soul of every man that revolts at the crucifixion of a mother of the race, even in the form of the most ignorant and degraded woman.

The time has come for New York, the great leader in the sisterhood of states, to abolish this relic of barbarism and give the criminals, by useful labor for years, the opportunity to atone in a measure for their crimes, and benefit society by their patient industry.

By making our prisons what they should be, schools of reformation, where the best elements in the human mind can be awakened and developed, men and women might graduate as skilled laborers, scholars in the rudiments of learning, with clearer moral perceptions and with new hopes and ambitions, a blessing to themselves, the family and the state.—[Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

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A Polygamous Congressman.

BY CHARLES CLARK MILLARD.

The alleged crime for which the religious press would have Mr. Roberts, the "triple alliance" member-elect from Utah, excluded from a seat in the national house of representatives, is not a "malum in se", but only a "malum prohibitum". It is a crime only when and where prohibited by law; therefore if Mr. Roberts has violated no law, he is guilty of no crime.

It appears, from numerous extracts in the Literary Digest, that the law of Utah against plural marriages is not retro-active, and the law enacted for the same purpose by congress does not apply to any state; and, as the "triple alliance" was concluded at a time and place when and where no statute law existed prohibiting it, the verdict in this case must be, "No crime has been committed". But it is claimed that he should be excluded because he is immoral; and the only immorality alleged is the having three wives. If Col. Ingersoll were a member of the house he could, and doubtless would, consistently object to the seating of Mr. Roberts on account of immoral conduct; that is, conduct not conducive to the best welfare and the greatest happiness of men, women and children. But ministers, religious editors and church members generally have solemnly pledged themselves to take the Bible for "their only and sufficient rule of faith and practice", and the Bible forbids polygamy, if it forbids it at all, only in certain special cases. If bishops, deacons, etc., are prohibited from having more than one wife, which is doubtful, other men are not; and church people are estopped by their own act from calling that immoral which their "only rule of faith and practice" nowhere condemns.

"The father of the faithful", the man "after God's own heart", and thousands of the best and most faithful "servants of God" under the special leadership of Jehovah, for more than fifteen hundred years—including prophets, priests and kings—had more wives than has the member-elect from Utah, and in not a single instance were they reprovved for so doing. Has God so changed that what pleased him then displeases him now? "What God hath cleansed" Christians should not "call common or unclean". Mr. Roberts says that "Christians must learn to be more tolerant of polygamists or give up the joyous hope of finally resting in Abraham's bosom."

Brigham Young once offered to reform and from that time restrict himself to one woman if all the members of congress would do like-

wise, but the offer was not accepted. Representative Carpenter, of Wisconsin, in his famous speech excusing or justifying his course in voting for the back-salary-grab law, indirectly admitted that it was common for a member to have a family at Washington, besides the one he left in his district; and the religious editors did not howl. Then, the enormity of the offense does not consist in a member of congress having more than one woman, but in publicly acknowledging, protecting and caring for their wives or concubines. Those who assume that they are the good people of the United States are willing that public thieves and robbers shall sit in the house, with the saloon keeper, the partner of courtesans and the frequenter of "dives", if they admit that what the good people profess to believe is correct. Practice is nothing; theory is everything.

This man's conduct is no worse than that of other members, past and prospective, but he does not hide it—he believes he is doing right; away with him!

But, should a polygamist be admitted to membership in the house? No; certainly not! The house should, immediately after its organization, adopt a rule declaring that "only men who have heretofore and do now keep themselves unto one woman, their own lawful wife, or unto none if they are single men, shall be eligible to a seat in this body". Then the gentleman from Utah could retire gracefully and in honorable company, the house could retain its self-respect and the office of representative might hereafter be compelled to seek the man.

At an inquest recently held in England on the body of a woman who died of starvation while her husband and his housekeeper were enjoying themselves at the seaside, a "mission lady" who had visited the deceased stated in her testimony that she was not at all concerned with the condition of any sufferer she might visit except in a "spiritual" way! This is true Christian love! What matters it if the body starve to death so the "soul" be "saved"? To feed the body only defers the soul's eternal bliss. Why don't the Christians all try to reach heaven a little more quickly?—[Secular Thought.

In every country and in every age the priest has been hostile to liberty; he is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own.—[Thomas Jefferson.

"Christian science" is not positive, but entirely negative. It is founded on denials of things that exist, and affirmations of conditions which have no reality.—[Flaming Sword.