

For the Torch of Reason.

An Infidel's Christianity.

BY ISAAC A. POOL.

AS the light, over brilliant, but daz-
zles and mars,
So the umbrage of evening un-
covers the stars.
You have carried the tints that arouse
and enthuse,
For the banner you flaunt for "The King
of the Jews";
You have painted great pictures by mas-
ters in art;
You have sung by musicians the tones
of the heart;

You have filled up the language with
quibbles and lies,
Till invisible heavens appear in the
skies!
The historian tells what no mortal has
seen;
Into romance the Christ sends a hallow-
ing sheen;
For Apollo, the poet, the church must
inspire,
And "the blood of the Lamb" be the
song of the lyre.

From the pulpit you pictured the hor-
rors of hell,
Till the sulphurous pit gave a horrible
smell;
Then the archway of promise triumph-
antly showed,
As the terminal point of your narrow-
gauge road.
You have kept to your text over thous-
ands of years,
Though the "blood of the martyrs" out-
measures theirs tears;

But the beauty with which all our lives
have been crammed,
Has been tagged with the motto, "Be-
lieve or be damned."
Now I think it is time to give Humans a
chance.
If your pipers are through with their
horrible dance.
Put your fetiche aside, till we wipe from
our eyes
The rank inflammation, the fear and sur-
prise

That have come from the horrors you
paint for the goats,
While the sheep into Zion are borne by
your boats.
For we know if a soul can inhabit the
flesh,
That it comes from a principle ancient,
not fresh!
That if one be immortal, then all shall
see life
When they pass from this struggle of
turmoil and strife;

That the facts of Credulity—Reason, or
Doubt,
Not a fiat eternal could ever rule out.
Nor a change could be made in immuta-
ble laws,
By the fancies of man with a mighty
first cause.
You should shut up your temples of
merciless lies,
Or bestow them on science and try to
grow wise.

For the longer you ponder that wonder-
ful book,
which for ages on ages the churches for-
sook,
So the farther at last will you pass from
the rules
That were only invented to captivate
fools!
Or, perhaps I should state, though the
statement seem rash,
You'll escape free salvation and save all
your cash!

Sam Rice's Romance.

A WESTERN STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS

CHAPTER III.

THE hour of departure from
Lucky-dog, for Sam's coach,
was 4 o'clock in the morn-
ing; and its driver was not a little
surprised when about to mount the
box to discover Mrs. Page waiting
to take a seat beside him. After
the adventure of the previous night
it was with some restraint that he
addressed her; and there was want-
ing also something of his cheerful

alacrity of manner when he re-
quested the stranger who had tak-
en the box seat to yield it to a lady.
The stranger's mood seemed uncon-
genial, for he declined to abdicate,
intimating that there was room for
the lady between himself and the
driver, if she insisted upon an out-
side seat.

But Mrs. Page did not insist.
She whispered Sam to open the
coach door and quietly took a seat
inside; and Sam, with a sense of
irritation very unusual with him,
climbed to his place, giving the
"cayuses" the lash in a manner that
set them off on a keen run. By
the time he had gotter his team
cooled down, the mood had passed,
and the longing returned to hear
the sweet voice, and watch the
bright eyes that had made his hap-
piness on former occasions. He
was puzzled and pained by the
evidence he possessed of her con-
nection, in some way, with the vic-
tim of lynch law, that seemed like
a dream in the clear, sunny air of
morning, while the more bliss-
ful past asserted its claim to be
considered reality. Not a lark,
warbling its flute-notes by the way-
side, not a pretty bit of the famil-
iar landscape, nor glimpse of brook
that leaped sparkling down the
mountain, but recalled some charm-
ing utterance of Mrs. Dolly Page,
as he first knew her; as he could
not now recognize her in the pale,
nervous and evidently suffering
woman, sitting closely veiled inside
the coach.

Occupied with these thoughts,
Sam felt a disagreeable shock when
the outside passenger, in a voice
that contrasted roughly with that
other voice which was murmuring
in his ear, began a remark about
the mining prospects of Lucky-dog.

"Some rich discoveries made in
the neighborhood, eh? Did you
ever try your luck at mining?"

"Waal, no. I own some stock,
though," answered Sam, carelessly.

"In what mine?"

"In the Nip-and-tuck."

"Good mine, from all I hear
about it. Never did any prospect-
ing?" asked the stranger, in that
tone which denotes only a desire to
make talk, with a view to killing
time.

"No," in the same tone.

"That's odd," stuffing a handful
of cut tobacco into his mouth. "I
would have sworn 'twas you I saw
swinging a pick in the canyon east
of camp last night."

"I'm not much on picks," Sam
returned, with a slowness that well
counterfeited indifference. "I was
visiting a lady last evening, which
is a kind of prospecting more in
my line."

"Yes, I understand; that lady
inside the coach. She's a game
one."

"It strikes me you're devilish free
in your remarks," said Sam, be-

coming irritated again.

"No offense meant, I'm sure. We
may as well talk this matter over
calmly, Mr. Rice. You see it's ten
to one that you are implicated in
this business. Been very attentive
to Mrs. Page. Made several trips
together. Let her handle your
horses, so she could take them out
of the stable for them thieves. Bur-
ied her thieving, gambling hus-
band for her. You see the case
looks bad, any way; though I'm
inclined to think you've just been
made a tool of. I know she's a
smart one. 'Tain't often you find
one smarter."

Sam's eyes oscillated. He was
strongly minded to pitch the outside
passenger off the coach. The strug-
gle in his breast between conviction
and resistance to conviction
amounted to agony. He could not
in that supreme moment discrim-
inate between the anger he felt at
being falsely accused and the grief
and rage at being so horribly dis-
illusioned. Their combined an-
guish paled his cheeks and set his
teeth on edge; of all of which the
outside passenger was coolly cog-
nizant. As they were at that mo-
ment in sight of the first station,
he resumed:

"Let her get up here if she wants
to; I can ride inside. I don't want
to be hard on her; but mind, if you
breathe a word to her about my be-
ing an officer, I'll arrest you on sus-
picion. Let every tub stand on its
own bottom. If she's guilty you
can't help her, and don't want to,
either: if she's innocent she'll come
out all right, never fear. Are you
on the square, now?"

"Have you got a warrant?" asked
Sam in a low tone, as he wound the
lines around the break previous to
getting down.

"You bet! but I'm in no hurry
to serve it. Piney-woods Station'll
do just as well. Telegraph office
there."

Mr. Rice was not in any haste
this morning, being, as he said,
ahead of time. He invited Mrs.
Page to take her usual place on the
box, telling her the gentleman had
concluded to go inside; and
brought her a glass of water from
the bar. While he was returning
the glass, the passengers, including
him of the outside, being busied
assuaging their thirst with some-
thing stronger than water, a rattle
of wheels and a clatter of hoofs was
heard, and lo! Mrs. Dolly Page was
discovered to be practicing her fa-
vorite accomplishment of driving
six-in-hand!

When the "outside" recovered
from his momentary surprise, he
clapped his hand on the shoulder
of Mr. Rice and said, in a voice
savage with spite and disappoint-
ment:

"I arrest you, sir."

"Arrest and be d—d!" return-
ed Sam. "If you had done your
duty you'd have arrested her while

you had the chance."

"That's so — your head is level;
and if you'll assist me in getting on
to Piney-woods Station in time to
catch the run-away — for she can't
very well drive beyond that station
— I'll let you off."

"You'll wait till I'm on, I reck-
on. My horses can't go on that
errand, and you darsn't take the
up-driver's team. Put that in your
pipe and smoke it, old smarty!" —
and Sam's eyes emitted steel-blue
lightnings, though his face wore a
fixed expression of smiling.

Upon inquiry it was ascertained
that horses might be procured a
mile back from the station; and
while the baffled officer and such
of the passengers as could not wait
until next day went in pursuit of
them, Sam mounted one of the
"cayuses" and made what haste he
could after the coach and Wells,
Fargo & Company's express box.
Within a mile or less of Piney-
woods Station, he met the keeper,
the grooms and an old man or two
that chanced to have been about
the place, all armed to the teeth,
who, when they saw him, halted in
surprise.

"Why, we reckoned you was
dead," said the head man, with an
air of disappointment.

"Dead?" said Sam. "Have you
seen my coach?"

"That's all right, down to the
station; and the plucky gal that
druv it told us all about the raid
the road agents made on you.
Whar's the passengers? any of 'em
killed?"

"Passengers are all right. Where
is Mrs. Page?"

"She cried an' tuk on awful
about ye; and borrowed a hoss to
ride right on down the road to meet
the other stage an' let 'em know
what's up."

"She did, did she?" said Sam,
very thoughtfully. "Waal, that is
odd. Why, she ran away with my
team—that's what she did; and it's
all a hoax about the road agents.
The passengers are back at the
other station."

Sam had suddenly become "all
things to all men" to a degree that
surprised himself. He was wrong
about the horse, too, as was proven
by its return to its owner four days
after. By the same hand came the
following letter to Mr. Samuel
Rice:

"DEAR MR. RICE:— It was so
good of you! I thank you more
than I can say. I wish I could set
myself right in your eyes, for I
prize your friendship dearly—dearly;
but I know that I cannot. It
has not been all my fault. I was
married to a bad, bad man when I
was only fifteen. He has ruined
my life; but now he is dead and I
need not fear him. I will hereafter
live as a good woman should live.
The tears run down my cheeks as I
write this farewell, as they did that
day when I saw that sweet woman
and her babe at the farm-house
gate and knew what was in your