

bland Celestial says that China wants our science, and wants to trade with us, but doesn't want our missionaries. What is more, she won't have them. And that is all there is in it.—[Freethinker.]

Faithful to All Promises.

There is one side of Mark Twain's character that merits the admiration of everyone, relates the Saturday Evening Post. It has been splendidly shown in his determination to pay the liability incurred in the failure of a publishing house and in the success of his five years' work. But it does not stop there. He is faithful to the last degree to every promise he makes. Some years ago he was elected a member of a prominent Grand Army Post in Maryland, and he promised to be present at the annual meeting and make an address. It was an opportunity for the people of Baltimore to deluge him with hospitality, and a committee was formed to take charge of him for a big reception as soon as he was through with his speech at the banquet. This speech was one of the best he ever delivered and it put the crowd in roars of laughter.

But he did not attend the reception. The explanation he gave almost brought tears to the eyes of those who received it. His daughter was critically ill in Hartford. He would not break his engagement with the Grand Army post, but the reason he did not accept the reception also was that within a few minutes after he had concluded his address he was taking the first train home.

Another story illustrates his fidelity to his friends. In a certain city he was visiting a man who had become prominent in literature, although poor in the goods of this world. The leaders in society had invited Mark Twain to a reception and he had about concluded to go when he asked if his friend would also be present. The reply was that he had not been invited. Instantly Mr. Clemens said that, under no circumstances, would he attend the function, and when an explanation was pressed for he said a few things that made the snobs feel rather humiliated.

In another case he assisted in a reading, and, finding that the other man was in need of money, refused to accept a penny for his services. All the proceeds went to the poorer man.

Some Familiar Terms Defined.

In the Literary Guide of London, Mr. F. J. Gould furnishes some definitions of terms of different meanings, but often used interchangeably:

A Freethinker is one who does not hesitate to think independently on religious and kindred questions,

and to express his thought.

An Atheist is a Freethinker who rejects as incomprehensible all conceptions of God hitherto formulated, and who therefore excludes such conceptions from his scheme of life.

An Agnostic is a Freethinker who affirms that the finite and relative mind of man cannot now, and never will, understand the nature and origin of the infinite universe.

A Secularist is a Freethinker who, while not denying the existence of spiritual or future worlds, claims that the present world is the only one we can at present understand, and it therefore demands our whole attention and service.

A Positivist is a Freethinker who excludes theology and metaphysics from his scheme of life, makes all Sciences subordinate to sociology, constantly bears in mind his indebtedness to the labors of his forefathers, and regards the Service of Man as the best of all religions.

An Ethicist is a Freethinker who regards morality as the chief characteristic of man, and disassociates it from theological sanctions.

A Rationalist is a Freethinker who, in matters of religious and philosophical interest, will accept no affirmation on mere authority (academic or priestly), but applies the best critical tests of which he is capable.

Was He on a Journey or Asleep?

The daily papers give, with much painfulness of detail, an account of the killing by the Chinese of two female missionaries, to whom, in generous headlines, the crown of true martyrdom is accorded.

It appears that all the other inhabitants of this particular mission were summarily put to the sword, while these women were reserved for great refinements of torture. Having been forced to witness the murder and outrage of their companions, they were stripped of their clothing and paraded before crowds in attitudes the most shocking to their feelings of modesty. Under conditions indescribably revolting they became victims of the inflamed soldiery, no sanctuary of their persons being spared, and each being compelled to participate in the degradation of the other. Afterward the hair of their head was tied to the ends of poles and they were pushed along the streets to a place of execution, where having had their breasts cut off, they were decapitated.

And so their torture was ended. Meanwhile what was the behavior of the women? It becomes apparent from the account, that they had made up their minds to be martyrs for Christ's sake, and they bore themselves as such, throughout. They sang hymns, they praised God, and their eyes and

clasped hands were continually raised toward heaven.

The scene must to have been harrowing, and from a religious point of view edifying; and if there was in the crowd any person with instincts other than those of a wild beast he must have felt like rushing to the rescue of the women, even though he thereby lost his own life. Certainly we may say that had there been present one possessing the power, without risk to himself, of snatching these modern virgins from the grasp of the incarnate demons and wreaking condign punishment on their outragers, he would not have hesitated for an instant before interfering. But no such one was there.

And yet if the religion which these women went to China to propagate is true we are wrong in that last statement. One was there—the One whom these women worshiped and to whom their prayer and praise were addressed. Within the immediate sound of their voices—else were prayer and praise a mockery and a useless agitation of the air—resided their God, the God to whose watchful care over his children, so the ministers tell us, the care of an earthly parent is not for a moment to be compared.

The deity present when the women were outraged and slain was the God with whose special providences all Christian narrative and history are filled. This is the God who fought beside his chosen people in Palestine—with an account of which instance of his protecting care the women, doubtless, had often informed their slayers; he was with the Israelites and made nothing of such miracles as opening seas that they might escape thereby from their pursuers; he was with Daniel in the den of lions, with the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace; and from that time to the day when in answer to the prayer of Dwight L. Moody he brought into port the steamer Spree—which, we are told, must otherwise infallibly have been lost—he has manifested the liveliest interest in the safety of those who believed in him.

Not only has he to each of these, at some time or other, if we may credit their word, vouchsafed a providential escape from danger and death, but he has brought sure and swift retribution upon the wicked. He has been instant to drown thoughtless youth for fishing or swimming upon the holy day set apart by his church for his worship; he has paralyzed the tongue or petrified the muscular system of blasphemers; he has raised up Christian rulers to bear rule in his name; he has at times given Christian armies victory over heathen, and even, so mysterious are his ways, victory over each other; he has restored to health per-

sons whose cure by human means must have cost them the price of a doctor's visit; in cooperation with his priests he has given offspring to childless mothers, healed rheumatism, directed search for gold, and counted the hairs upon the heads of all the children of men. Marriages are made in his residence, and he joins man and wife together. He gives to one animal the means of seizing its prey, thus protecting it from starvation, and to the prey he gives the means of escape, so saving it from death. His care over his creatures is, in fact, so complete that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, and of how much more worth are two missionaries, both virgins, than one sparrow!

An event like that we have described raises one of the most perplexing problems in theology. In Paterson, New Jersey, a few days ago, he permitted a young girl whom he had created to be drugged into insensibility and violated by four male beings whom he had formed, and then to die from the effects of the drug and violence. Here, it would seem, any God not made of wood whence all the sap had departed would show his power; but perhaps the girl was not a Christian, and hence not under his special care.

But when the victims are missionaries of his word, women who have forsaken home and native land, renouncing all social joys and presenting themselves as unspotted offerings upon his altar, his brutal indifference stamps him the most apathetic and insensible of all imaginable objects. Compared with him a rock in the desert would be esteemed active and interested, and a tiger couched on its summit the picture of benignity.

It is true enough that these women have won the crown of martyrdom. They are martyrs to their faith in God which a million martyrdoms like their own declare to be a figment of the imagination. We may not interfere with their faith, but we can withdraw our support from a rascally hierarchy and ecclesiasticism which fattens on the capital it makes out of them. Their blood is on the hands of the priests and ministers of the churches that send them out to fall victims to the fanaticism they arouse.

[—The Truth Seeker.]

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