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## **The continental times. No. 1175. Vol. XXII. No. 33 September 15, 1915**

Berlin, Germany: C. White & Co., Ltd., September 15, 1915

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A HARVEST OF VICE IN INDIA.

The Revelations of an Indian Patriot.

By "A Voice from India."

The *Continental Times* of June 30th, quoted from the *Gaelic American* the words of Ronald MacNeill, member of the British Parliament, in which he regrets the awful fact that Tommy Atkins—the idealized British soldier—has before leaving for the scenes of war—left thousands upon thousands of young women and girls pregnant with illegitimate children in the English towns and villages near which he camped.

Humane persons everywhere will sympathize with these betrayed girls—many of whom as he says are "little more than children themselves"—and would wish that no brand of social ostracism should rest on them or on their still more irresponsible progeny.

But there is another aspect of the problem which Mr. MacNeill seems to ignore; and that is the stamp of drunkenness and debauchery and fear which the unfortunate children are likely to bear.

All those who have some insight into the slum life in England—and London especially—know what harvest the British nation has been reaping from that cankered part of its social system, and this new reaping will but add something to the fruits of the British Empire instead of the honest sober responsible citizens which a righteous nation can claim and expect. Verily one weakness shall be added to another in the case of a people who have set up greed and injustice as the ideals of their Empire.

But who dares to accuse the British Empire of such things? Listen!

There are some good people in England itself who are continuously fighting for social purity and who fought a kind of crusade against the legalized and sanctioned immorality of Tommy Atkins in India, who said that the Government should not sanction the keeping of public women in the Camp quarters. But the machinery of Government in India from the noble Lords—Viceroys and Governors—downwards, thought differently. It was a necessity of camp life and an unavoidable evil. So they decreed. But the things which the officials sanction are nothing compared to what they ignore and condone, and of which the well-intentioned champions of social purity in England are hardly aware.

Any one who has travelled in the Himalayan ranges where summer-quarters for the British garrisons are located and which are used in rotation for the healthy men or sickly or convalescent in the British armies in the north, can find out if he cares to inquire into the matter, what havoc the morality of Tommy Atkins has played on the surrounding villages. I happened to meet an Indian philanthropist who belonged to a purity league of which some American missionaries also are members in upper India. He told me with bated breath that the village population of these hills, consisting of simple, good-natured people and a fine race so far as beauty of form and feature is concerned, was being decimated through the prevalence of venereal diseases which not very long ago were unknown in these parts, and for which the imperial Tommy was mainly responsible. Families ruined and sterilized, villages decimated, with a weak, tainted stock lingering in the immediate neighborhood of the British garrisons. From a caste and religious prejudice, which in this case fortunately carries the instinct of race preservation within itself the more distant inhabitants of these hills are often unwilling to intermarry with them, and so in saving themselves from the Tommy-infected populace they also help to exterminate it.

"But this seems incredible, an exaggeration, anyhow we never see these things in print or hear of them," you may ask. And why? Because at one time the people in the centres of enlightenment, the press and the educated public were not aware of them nor have they realized it yet, and the Indian press which was now and then ventilating grievances against the British Government, since 1907 has been gagged by the press-laws, which prohibit writing things which may throw discredit on the ruling race. But what of the American missionary? He does not find it "politic" and expedient to write and talk against the British, not only in India but even away in his own free country, for he thinks that the Christian mission of his country may be thereby hampered. Only now and then an American missionary like J. T. Sunderland, identifies the mission of Christ with humanity, not confining it to his pet denomination. That is rare, and unfortunately the attention of such men does not seem to have been drawn to this problem yet.

But this ugly and dreadful fact remains like the ugly and dreadful fact that the British soldier in India feels at liberty when his whim or viciousness impels him to take the life of an inhabitant of India, for he knows full well that the highest punishment which can befall him for murder, thanks to the judges and juries of his own race—for he in most cases escapes scot-free—is one or two years of imprisonment in a comfortable jail, or a fine of a few hundred rupees. Not infrequently he is sent "home"—for which he is not sorry.

Not a year passes without one or more murders of the natives of India by Tommy Atkins. And yet since India had the "privilege" of being ruled or rather since the English set foot in India about two centuries ago, there is only one case recorded of an Englishman being hanged for murdering an Indian.

Two reasons are known for this notorious and disgraceful fact. One is that in the eyes of the Englishmen in India—with a few humane exceptions—the Englishman is a superior being whose life should not be weighed in the balance with a native of the soil. And the second reason is that if any such foolish justice were shown, the white rulers, *prestige* would be undermined. It may be that the Tommy, who represents the spirit of the British Lion abroad (in reality the bully and so a coward too) would lose his spirit of domineering lordship, and as he forms the base of an empire whose crest is cunning, it is not considered "wise" to discourage him by the unpolitic demands of justice.

So he continues to go out shooting near the villages and if by ill-luck some peasant objects to his shooting domestic pigeons or peacocks near men's habitations, or resents his evil intention against a woman, he adds the offending Indian to his bag. Sometimes the Tommy, asleep in his room in the midst of an Indian summer, suddenly awakes perspiring from his dreams of whisky, because the Indian labourer outside has gone to sleep in the intense heat, tired by the exertions of pulling the punka; and this son of Mars walks out in his ire to punish the offending "nigger"—(this is the only word in his vocabulary for even a prince among a people who have given philosophers and poets of the highest order to the world) and kicks him with his heavy jack boot on the head or in the stomach, and thus puts an end to his wretched existence, and retires to his barrack.

An inquest is held and the surgeon, who is an Englishman almost invariably, "finds" a bad spleen in the murdered man and records the "fact" and thus opens a loophole of safety for the dear Tommy; a thing hardly needed except for the *show* of law and order which are the traditional method of this Empire in bearing the "white man's burden." The trial commences, with an English judge and an English jury, and the public prosecutor himself an Englishman arranges the evidence with a show of calm impartiality allowing any damaging facts to be submerged, while the lawyer for defence ruthlessly pulls the native witnesses to pieces and proves them to be liars.

The murderer usually receives a few weeks or month's imprisonment and is thus converted in the eyes of the Anglo-Indian population into a martyr, to the "accursed" policy of keeping up a needless veneer of justice in which the people of India have long ago ceased to believe. And yet this "veneer" is not so needless even if the "natives" have no faith in it. It is for hoodwinking the civilized world, chiefly America and the British public "at home", and to answer formally the few friends of India in the British Parliament like Ramsay MacDonald, who have the "unchivalrous" and unimperial habit of putting awkward questions which tend to discredit the British rule in India.

There was a time—before 1907—when the Indian newspapers used to report these cases and to make unfavourable remarks concerning the results of these trials, but things have changed since the mighty sedition laws were forged at the Viceregal Council. Since then such remarks have ceased and even the bare reports of law court trials dwindled away. Nay, one hardly reads the news of such murders now—not that the murders have become rare—though perhaps there may have been a decrease owing to the private circulars and orders of the Government for more careful behaviour towards the "natives"—since a few British officials were killed by the Bengali anarchist's bombs. That would be no credit to the Tommy or the English official, and it would bring more comfort to the lovers of mankind all over the world to feel that the murders had ceased from a rise in the standard of justice and humanity in the breast of Tommy Atkins and his employers, if such a thing were compatible with the British Empire. And yet Tommy Atkins is the creature whom Rudyard Kipling has edified by his *Barrack Room Ballads*, and who in turn has edified Rudyard Kipling—even in the eyes of the American public.

Thus a trodden race continues to suffer and the oppressor continues to ride safe and arrogant! It cannot last very long, however, for the mills of vengeance are at work and they grind exceeding small. And while the Nemesis of Empires which grow fat and bloated by oppressing and starving others, is preparing to strike and batter at her ocean gates, the moral canker is at work long since within her own body. The English people loved freedom within their own shores but they have tasted of Empire abroad—but of the tainted delight of swaying the destiny of other races, of license over

the lives and labour and morals of their victims, and while "justice, prosperity and civilization" are on their lips, the intoxication of power clouds their brains and poisons their souls, so that they cannot see what moral infection they have spread in their own country from the body of their rotting Empire.

Tommy Atkins may be forgiven when he is called to his account but not so readily those who place him in such a position and encourage him in a behaviour, not only disgraceful to a human being but even to a beast. For he looks upon the native of India as almost a legitimate victim for his lust and ire.

Thus the Gods—the subtle moral forces—work out the doom of nations who have chosen the path of evil to decay and death, and thus too they work out the upward destiny of those who chose the better way—to growth and life.

By what has been said above it should not be understood that the whole race of Tommy Atkins is overladen with the heritage of Cain. By no means. The majority are the average type of English lower class men who are soldiers not because of any great sense of duty to their land but because they find other means of livelihood less congenial. There are a small percentage of highly brutalized natures, and a still smaller proportion of really good men. Of the latter class I came to know one—he was a Welshman—who was a remarkable student of poetry especially that of Tennyson and composed verses, the refined atmosphere of which Rudyard Kipling could not breathe and live. Why he became a soldier was a delicate secret which I would not probe out of regard for his highly sensitive nature. It may have been some disappointment in love, some desire to disappear and to become the "living dead" for, truly this life among his coarse surroundings was a kind of death to him, as I saw when I at his special request visited him in his barrack—a thing I would not have otherwise dreamt of doing. For to be in the proximity of the British soldier in India is to expose oneself to insult. As I sat there on his soldier's bed, his sergeant came in and asked him in the usual rough way who I was. My friend frowned imperceptibly and remained silent. I saw a tragic expression on his face. And these were his "superiors"! For I am sure that scarcely one of his Captains or Colonels or even Generals have soul enough to appreciate my friend. So well I remember when I went to the railway station to bid good-bye to him as his troop was leaving for South Africa to take part in the Boer War. I met him on the platform and he took me aside. "What do you think I will do where I am going? Can I kill any of my brothers? I will shoot in the air." I told him that I thought he would do his duty but he kept silent. I have learnt since what that "duty" turned out to be—the suppression and slaughter of freemen whose lands and mines were coveted by the English capitalists. Every Indian heart was glad whenever news of the repulse of the English appeared and sorry whenever we heard of the Boer's defeats. And although this was my feeling I could not then but tell him to follow his duty. That was one hour in my life when the departure of a friend to face death overwhelmed me and for once I forgot that resentment which smoulders in the hearts of a downtrodden and insulted people. He lived through the war and returned to England. I heard from him once or twice and then lost all clue of him in spite of my efforts to trace him; and with that I have closed the bright chapter of the sympathetic British soldier. The rest of the volume it dark and painful.

The few brutalized Tommies commit the crimes, the majority confine themselves to a rough and insulting behaviour towards Indians whenever they come in contact with the latter owing to the example set them by their superior officers which they emulate and improve upon; and all rest secure in the feeling that there is no crime or evil in behaving as they do, for there is no punishment for it. The rare exceptions perhaps regret these things but we never hear of any manifestation of sympathy. And who is to blame for it? Not so much the Tommy as his superiors and the Government who employs him and permits him all this licence in a subject land, and places prestige and false pride above all moral or even eventual political considerations.

Few very few English officers realize that each murder is a nail wrought for the coffin of their Empire—however remote the day of reckoning, when the lid shall be placed on it. Let us hope—in the interest of justice and humanity—that that hour is at hand.

Another German Marvel.

To keep pace with the flight of new war methods, a German doctor has invented, it is said, a wonderful new dressing for ulcers and open wounds. Hydrogen peroxide, the familiar dilute disinfectant and hair gilder, has been solidified in a concentration of 97 per cent. This solid form may be further medicated, then melted with hot water, and the resulting fluid brushed over the surface of a wound or sore.

A SANE CRITIC  
A Just Estimate of British Culture.

By R. H. C.

From the *New Age* of London we quote the following clear-sighted confession of intellectual conditions in a vulgarized England.

"It is very chivalrous of Professor Gide to enter the lists in our national defence against German criticism; but I do not know whether to thank him or not. In a recent issue of the *Daily News* he undertook to reply to Professor Sombart, who had written of us as follows:

"A people of shopkeepers, incapable of any achievement of intellectual culture—either in the present or in the future—whose philosophy, ethics, and religion are unadulterated manifestations of the spirit of the huckster... whose politics, like its morality, aims only at utility. It has only been able to create two things, comfort and sport; and these have contributed to destroy the last vestiges of its spiritual life."

But, in the first place, it is no defence to cite, as Professor Gide does, the great names of Newton, Milton and Shakespeare. These cannot be said to be achievements of our present. And, in the second place, we had better admit that there is some truth in the indictment. It is not, of course, altogether true; and to pronounce us incapable in the future of any intellectual achievement is to adopt the child of a mere German wish. But that we are for the moment and have been for twenty years incapable, as a nation, of maintaining, still less of transcending, our intellectual traditions is not alone a German discovery. Matthew Arnold announced it, and we have seen his forecast fulfilled. Let us confess our sins, the more certainly to amend our ways. It was not so long ago that I remarked in this column that other nations have some right to reproach us. Germany in particular.

If Germany has never equalled our English culture at its best, Germany can yet maintain that, while she has been striving to do so, we have been falling away. After all, the question is one of fact in great part. If it can be shown that there are more people in Germany who understand and appreciate our English classics than there are in England itself, the verdict would be against us obviously. And I am afraid that either there are, or would soon have been. The majority of cultured Germans certainly know our own educated classes. As things were going, in a very little while I believe that most of our classics would have been comparatively neglected here as they became more and more familiar to Germany. If that is not a proper ground of the reproach to us I do not know one. To fail even to understand, let alone to rival or surpass, our past achievements is surely almost a definition of decadence. And we were rapidly approaching that state. Unfortunately, too, the rot had gone so far that people were not even ashamed of it. We were all decadent together.

Time was when for an educated man to have to confess ignorance of his national classics was a moral torture to be avoided by all diligence. Within the last ten years we have seen many leaders of literary opinion glory in the confession. If they what shall mere readers be willing to confess? It is not surprising that they made a merit of absolving themselves from reading any classics whatever. Whether, as has been suggested, familiarity with our classics should be made obligatory on British citizens

after the war I am not prepared to say but only for the reason that I should not know how to enforce the regulation. Otherwise the same penalty should sanction the duty as now sanctions correct pronunciation and good manners, namely, ostracism from polite society. And the plea that no pleasure is taken for their own sake in exercises designed to make people healthy, beautiful, expert or polite—why should it be demanded of the exercises necessary to intelligence? Do you think the life, even of a professed student of literature and the arts, is all pleasure, and that never a disagreeable book needs to be read?"

A GIFTED PREACHER.

Sven Hedin on the Rev. Dr. Conrad. The following vivid account by the famous Sven Hedin gives one a clear idea of the passionate utterance and inspired words of the well-known clergyman Dr. Conrad, of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church at Berlin—whose deep-toned bells these days not only call the faithful to prayer, but boom forth the peans of victory.

"His words," writes the distinguished explorer, "flashed like falcion-thrusts and his powerful voice presented manly and well-chosen thoughts in cleverly devised sentences. He rose to the height of a prophet while thus thundering down from the pulpit; not gentle west winds, but portentous thunderbolts rolled from his lips. When sentimentality whinnily suggests to the priest to speak words of peace, not words of conflict, I might observe: those that sit with folded arms calmly before their overflowing fleshpots can easily criticise. But when innumerable hostile forces stand on all the borders, when an empire is threatened with destruction and a people with annihilation, what then? No longer do tones of tenderness suffice; even the ministers must grasp the sword, and press with all the others into the arena.

"The preacher spoke with warm courageous words of the duty which all owed the Fatherland, and of the divine confidence which the German people had in the righteousness of their cause. 'Be faithful even unto death' was woven like a leading motive throughout his discourse. A mood of profound solemnity and of joyous conviction that victory would be achieved prevailed among the congregation. The chorales were sung with deafening power and mightily rumbled the tone-billows of the organ. The church was filled to the doors—women in pathetic majority. How many mothers, wives, sisters and brides-to-be were fervently praying for the earth-gray fighters in the protecting trenches!"

The Freemen of England.

"What glorious privileges the proletariat possesses! It is good to know that even if you do not have enough bread to eat, at least you have a 'King and Country' belonging to you.... How gladly the humble wage-slave is led by the nose! Poor devil with the mind of a porpoise, he would not dream of taking a rifle and going out to fight for a decent living for himself or his dependents, but immediately his 'King and Country' call he is willing to go through Hell for them, and never question their right to ask him."

A. Ritchie Haining in "The Spur".

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