

**NATURAL GOODNESS;  
OR, HONOUR TO  
WHOM HONOUR IS DUE**

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Natural Goodness; Or, Honour to Whom Honour Is Due by T. F. Randolph Mercein

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# NATURAL GOODNESS:

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## HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR IS DUE.

SUGGESTIONS TOWARD AN

APPRECIATIVE VIEW OF MORAL MEN, THE PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF MORALITY, AND THE  
RELATION OF NATURAL VIRTUE TO RELIGION.

BY REV. T. F. RANDOLPH MERCEIN.

"His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him, that nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world—Behold a man!"

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## Preface.

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A BOOK, like an implement, must be judged by its adaptation to its special design, however unfit for any other end. This volume is designed to meet the peculiar difficulties of one class of thinkers, in regard to one aspect of religious truth. Its unfitness to meet other wants of other classes, is admitted in advance.

It may be a vain hope that the circle of moral men who attend our churches regularly, who are penetrated with a Christian sentiment, and who without a scholastic training are disciplined and practical thinkers, may find in these pages a view of their posi-

tion and relation to religious experience more satisfactory than is given by the ordinary sermon, or the discussions of Systematic Theology.

Different classes of men have different methods of thinking, as well as different points of view from which they see things. Standing upon separate *terraces* of the ascending slope of talent and culture, each class looks out and sees Truth encircled by a new combination of difficulties. A teacher, then, must take *their* position, and from thence relieve their perplexities. And so each class has its own peculiar method of associating thoughts and framing arguments—has its own peculiar *idiom* of thinking—and in order to be easily and fully convinced, must be addressed in its own *dialect* of thought.

None will expect, then, an exhaustive discussion of our topics, but only a considera-



tion of such prominent points and occasional aspects as are of interest to the men for whom we write. Much may be said or left unsaid which, in view of any other class, would be of different propriety.

Yet, although these essays are distinct, there is a logical connexion between them, and they suggest a general theory. So far as it varies from the common methods of explaining the natural virtues, the author can only ask that he may not be judged harshly, as he has only suggested, and with diffidence. Certainly no other view has yet *satisfied* the Church. Every sincere, although unsuccessful, attempt to open the lock of Truth is a benefit to mankind. As each new key of theory is found to fit one ward, and yet another, we gain a clearer idea of the key which will pass them all, and spring the bolt.

The technical phrases employed to denote

certain experiences or doctrines have their value: they have for the Church a definite meaning, and are essential to accurate and brief expression: but to one without, even if they do not seem like *cant*, they are apt to convey a false meaning, or no meaning at all. A similar remark may be made in regard to the usual routine of argumentation. Therefore we feel free to employ new terms and new forms of argument, not because they are better in themselves, but because they come free from the old prejudices.

That there is increasing need of such books is certain: and if no more is accomplished, this volume may incite abler pens to write a better.

## Themes.

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- I. INJUSTICE DONE TO MORAL MEN.
- II. THE GENERAL UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF DEEP GUILT.
- III. THE TEMPORAL REWARDS OF MORALITY.
- IV. THE COMPARATIVE RECTITUDE OF HUMAN CONDUCT.
- V. THE NATURAL VIRTUES.
- VI. THE RELATION OF MORALITY TO RELIGION.
- VII. THE RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IN HUMAN NATURE.
- VIII. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE—CONVICTION.
- IX. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE—REPENTANCE.
- X. RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE—FAITH.
- XI. LOVE TO GOD, THE CRITERION OF VIRTUE.
- XII. INJURY DONE TO RELIGION BY MORAL MEN.