

TWICE-BORN MEN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649726240

Twice-born men by Harold Begbie

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HAROLD BEGBIE

**TWICE-BORN
MEN**

TWICE-BORN MEN

A FOOTNOTE IN NARRATIVE TO PROFESSOR WILLIAM
JAMES'S STUDY IN HUMAN NATURE 'THE
VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE'

BY

HAROLD BEGBIE

AUTHOR OF 'MASTER WORKERS,' 'THE PRIEST,' 'THE VIGIL,'
'TABLES OF STONE,' 'BACKET AND REST,'
'THE CAGE,' ETC.

POPULAR EDITION

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

*'No heart is pure that is not passionate,
No virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic.'*

SHELLEY.

45206379 ✓

TO

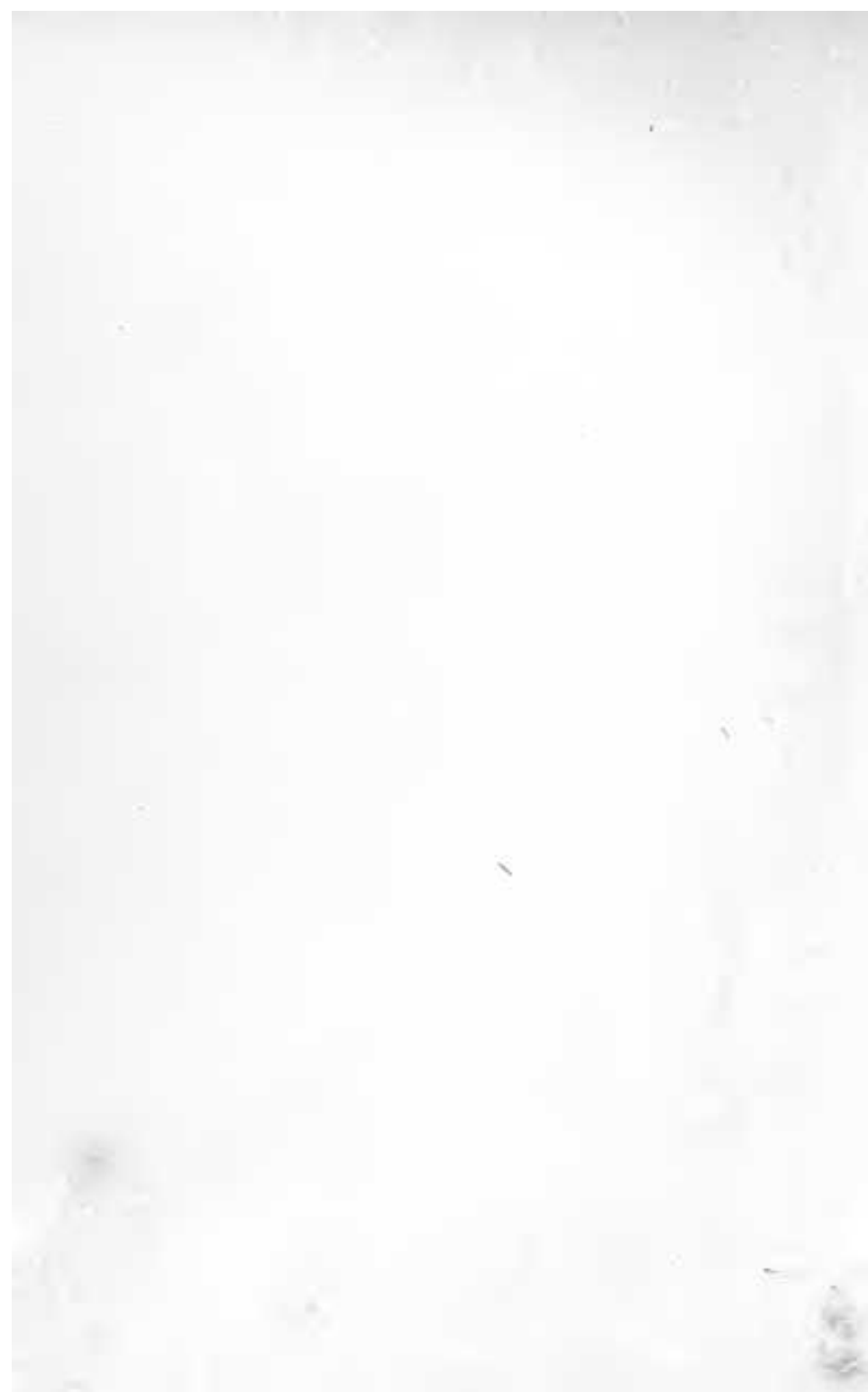
WILLIAM JAMES

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

WITH ADMIRATION AND RESPECT

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	9
I.—A PART OF LONDON	23
II.—THE PUNCHER	29
III.—A TIGHT HANDFUL	45
IV.—O. B. D.	63
V.—THE CRIMINAL	77
VI.—A COPPER BASHER	101
VII.—LOWEST OF THE LOW	117
VIII.—THE PLUMBER	131
IX.—RAGS AND BONES	151
X.—APPARENT FAILURE	167
POSTSCRIPT	187



PREFACE

I

WHILE I was gathering together the strange and almost inconceivable materials which go to make this book, I was conscious of so many and such diverse emotions that the point of view from which it should be written changed with every fresh turn in my journey of discovery, and perplexed me increasingly with the multitude of its aspects.

But now that I sit down actually to write what I have learned, now that I set out to play showman, dramatist, or author to the little group of human beings with whom I have been companioned for the past few weeks, there is in my mind one uppermost feeling, one central and dominating sensation of the emotions, and this is a feeling of astonishment that all the terrible tragedy, all the infinite pathos, all the amazing psychology, all the agony and bitter suffering, all the depth and profundity of spiritual experience with which I have to deal, all of it, was discovered in a single quarter of London.

Here in this little book, which tells the story of a few humble and quite commonplace human beings, is such astonishing psychology as must surely bewilder the metaphysician, the social reformer, the criminologist, the theologian, and the philosopher; and it is unearthed, brought to the surface of observation, this incredible psychology, from a single quarter of London, from a few shabby streets huddled together on the western edge of the metropolis, forming a locality of their own, calling themselves by a particular name, and living almost as entirely aloof from the rest of London as Cranford from Drumble.

One would say that a man might go here and there in London, picking and choosing among all the city's multifarious districts, and at the end of his researches find half a dozen human beings whose psychological experiences would amaze the general world and prove of considerable, even of lasting interest to metaphysics and philosophy. But who would say that one might find, without difficulty and without selection, in a single negligible fragment of the vast city, men whose feelings, struggles, and experiences in the moral sphere contribute such extraordinary material to psychology as that of which this book is composed? One is startled by the possibility that every single individual among the swarming millions of London, the fermentation of whose brains is the spirit, mystery, and attraction of the great city, has this supreme interest for the rest of us—that every single individual maintains a struggle of some kind with the forces of good and evil, and in the silence of his soul holds some secret intercourse with the universe. Is it possible that the vilest, the most degraded, the most abandoned, and even the most stupid of all those massed and congregated millions, hides from the gaze of his fellow-men longings and hungering aspirations which in the eyes of the angels entitle him to his place in the cosmos?

One feels, standing at some central point in London, and studying the incessant multitude of human beings, that personality is blurred into some such sameness as one sees in a flock of sheep, or in a procession of waves, or in an ant-heap. And passing through a dreary street of interminable villas, one feels that a monotony similar to the bricks and slates and window-frames must characterize the lives of their occupiers, that the man who lives in Number 3 can be of no more interest to us than the man who pays the rent of Number 27, and that all the children playing on the pavements or shouting in the road are similar one to the other as the leaves on the stunted limes behind the garden railings.

But reflection tells us that every human unit in this great mass of mortality has a silence and a solitude proper