

THE AVERAGE MAN

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The Average Man by Henry Dumont

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HENRY DUMONT

**THE
AVERAGE MAN**

By the Same Author

A Golden Fancy
and Other Poems

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Foreword

This little work is not presumed to be an exhaustive treatise upon any subject. It is simply intended to present a slightly different viewpoint from that of the average man upon the subject, mainly, of religion.

The Average Man



CHAPTER I.

The average man is enslaved by Tradition. Existing forms of Religion, Politics and Industry are established in his brain and heart as fixed and final. Yet it somehow seems that in some lucid moment of his dream he perceives a hint of change, and deep in his heart feels a desire for change. Nothing is so firmly grown but that the germs of decay are in it. No institution, however honored by time, is immutable. The influence of Change is felt throughout the entire universe; the universe of mind as well as of matter.

But the average man is under the hypnotic power of Tradition. To him the world seems to move as of old. The seasons come and go; the seed is sown and the crop is harvested; the babe is born,

and death mows down the aged and unwary. The hands of men are day by day employed at customary occupations, and night silences all but the watchman on his rounds, the revelers in their dens, the cricket and other natural and artificial noises of the dark. The same old sea laves the same old shore; the same moon shines upon accustomed scenes; the stars whirl in their courses as ever, since they sang together at the birth of the world.

So thinks the average man. He will not admit all this, it is true. He flatters himself that he lives in an advanced age. He believes that he is aware of some evidences of Change; some signs of growth. He has a hazy notion that Evolution is working its tortoise-like way along the various highways of human thought and action—but whatever he may think, this he does positively, he clings with more or less tenacity to the Politics of his father and to the Religion of his great-grandfather.

It is not meant by this that he is necessarily a Republican because his father was

a Republican, nor that he has followed the lead of a Methodist great-grandfather along sectarian lines. He may be a Democrat, if fortune has so favored him, and he may not be found within the confines of any denomination, but his habits of thought and the roots of his beliefs are of a piece with those of his forbears. He is slow to depart from beaten paths, although the straight and narrow way offers no irresistible charms to his feet. He dare not break away from Tradition and strike out along original lines of thought. He is held by an undefined fear of evil consequences. The explanation is simple. It is due to his education; to the power of Tradition itself to bind him to its service.

The average man derives his education from his parents, his teachers and his preachers, and it is motley education indeed.

His parents, however broadminded they may be, cannot so far ignore their own mental training as to give him a free mental atmosphere in which to expand, and his education is tainted by contact

with theories of life which have been outgrown by the advanced among men.

It does not seem to have occurred to the average man that the nature of the child is a product largely of Environment, of the material condition into which the human being is born and in which he continues to exist. His nature is the product of the Environment of his parents, which, in turn, was derived from the Environment of ancestors through countless generations. It is fortunate that the father's *beliefs* are not transmitted physically to the child; being acquired through teaching and observation they are capable of alteration and improvement. When his teachers get him beneath their thumbs he is still further moulded into the image that has been designed for him—the image of the Average Man. He is taught that History is a record of the deeds of Kings, the decrees of Parliaments and the discoveries of Great Men. His memory is taxed with twisted dates of Wars, Reigns and Judicial Decisions. His mind is filled with pictures of battles, the deaths of

heroes, and the speeches of splendid statesmen; but little of the great heart of the Multitude does he see; little does he understand the meaning of what he is permitted to know of the Past.

He considers the age of the world to be 6,000 years or thereabouts, turned adrift in the universe ready-made, just as it appears today. He believes the earth to be the center of the universe and man the center of the earth. He believes the sun, moon and stars were made to give light to the earth and that all things were made for Man, and it appears that the average man considers himself the most important human being of the lot. He has no conception of the struggle of the race from Savagery to Barbarism, and from Barbarism to Civilization. To him the discovery of the use of fire and the invention of the bow and arrow are comparatively insignificant things and mark no great human epochs. The light of Science has not yet penetrated the brain of the average man, and while he has learned that modern observation has shown that the firmament does not re-