

**FURLOUGH REMINISCENCES,
THOUGHTS AND STRAYINGS,
THE KOTE MASOOL, AND THE
DUEL; PP. 16-232**

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by W. H. Jeremie

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mer, who, describing the amiable qualities of his nag, observed: "He is a regular good 'un, for he bears malice like any Christian."

Circumstances threw me for several months among a most conceited body of schismatics: the elect as they fancy themselves; forgetting that election implies a choice made of one by another, and not the choosing of a person by himself. They call themselves Saints, giving this as a reason, that Saint (or Holy) is a term of humility of a lower degree than Christian. Yet in the same breath, with irrepressible complacency on their countenances, out comes, "but the Saints (i. e. themselves) shall on the last day judge even angels." This is not the place for their doctrines; whatever of truth they have, they hold in common with all Christians, *their charity* is their own; and is, it is almost needless to add, of quite a different species to that supereminent of virtues described by the Apostle Paul.

I once wrote a tract on Plymouth Brethrenism, and read it to several members of this clique of schismatics: "Oh that's not my opinion, it is Mr. So and So's. I completely deny this, it is only held by another Mr. So and So and his adherents." For even these sectarians have split into numerous divisions, subdivisions, and sections. The upshot of the matter was, that no one assented to my remarks. None could confute them: the most they could do was to say—such and such were the doctrines of or remarks applicable to individuals, and not common to the body. In justice to my tract, I shall only add, that my observations were drawn from the bulk of the members of this sect in the same town as myself; that it is very easy where no subscription to written articles are required, for individuals, whilst conforming outwardly to all the practices of their clique, to deny in

private each and every doctrine, and all follies or peculiarities of conduct.

In directing my remarks chiefly to these schismatics, I shall describe also what I have seen common to others; and shall class them all under the generic appellation of saint. Using this word *only* in the sense it obtains in the world: in that sense it is exclusively appropriated to knaves, fools, and enthusiasts, wearing the cloak of religion; "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

If my remarks be chiefly applicable to dissenters, they are not because they dissent, but on account of the discipline of the church keeping its adherents within just bounds. Persons must leave the church, they must dissent, to give play to their vagaries. Far, very far, it is from my intention to attempt to cast ridicule upon individuals or on any society because they happen to differ in points of religion. To expect that others should exactly agree with one's own opinions, that every phase of another's mind should be similar to one's own, is as preposterous as insisting that every man should resemble our individual selves in face and figure. We are not surprised when people differ from us in these two latter respects; it is when we behold devilish contortions, or inhuman excrescences, that we turn away in disgust.

Thus it is with doctrines: when individuals set up for judges, condemn all things and all persons, reserving for themselves the monopoly of Christian virtues and Christian knowledge, it is high time that they should be held up to public scorn; held up as a mirror to themselves, that the honest but deluded among them may come out of so abominable a fraternity.

The present race of Saints is a spurious slip of the old sturdy Puritans. Their virtues these possess not, preserving however their cant, hypocrisy, and lying. The

law being in full force, they at present disclaim all political agitation ; their kingdom is not of this world, they will tell you ; let them only get the upper hand, and see how soon they will change their tune ;—*then*, as of old, they will argue, giving chapter and verse, that the earth is the heritage of the Saints.

Their society is composed of a few apostate clergymen ; who hate the church with the proverbial intensity of a renegade's hatred. These finding their views of preferment thwarted or hopeless : their common-place talents dooming them to subordinate employ, leave the church, and become Saints. At first they are flattered and made much of by the fraternity they join : nature destined them for a low station, and even here they soon fall to their proper level. They seldom can keep a place among the top sawyers. There are a few educated men : these again, from some slip of the pen at college, or from not meeting with sufficient success in their profession, secede. There are many low tradesmen, shopkeepers, and footmen. The church has no attraction for them, as it enjoins silence : being restless, discontented, ignorant fellows, every suggestion of their own evil passions and wayward temper they pervert into " a call," and turn Saints. But the most numerous—at least two-thirds in amount—are not the fair, but of the fair sex. A few pretty girls are occasionally met with among the Saintesses ; they follow, being in a manner compelled, in the wake of their parents. The generality of Saintesses are ugly. Spinsters of a certain age, whose chance of wedlock is on the wane, form a numerous army of virgin devotees. Widows with small fortunes and much celestial furor close the account. All these idle, squabbling, and gadding to and fro, pass their sojourn here below in groaning and singing.

Laughable as it may appear, groans and songs are indes-

pensable to saintship ; no Saint was ever deficient, as to quantity, in these accomplishments. I said before they were a spurious slip, and even in these practices they show their degeneracy. There is a want of *heartiness* which was wont to distinguish their forefathers. Their groan is no longer from the depths of the heart. No liver-bursting, diaphragm-perturbating sound, making the compassionate bystanders thankful that it was out : No ! theirs is now a sniffing noise, indicative of uncleaned nostrils and uncleared throats.

Singing in Scripture, with an exception or two, is used as a figure of speech, where a part is put for the whole, and means adoration. Now melody depending on the ear and voice, should a man be without these, (as I can aver very many saints are), to him singing can afford no real pleasure : yet being a saint he persists in emitting twanging sounds, for such, in his doltishness, he imagines will be his employment in heaven, and in that his chief recompense. Such are his ideas of heavenly joys,—horrid discords !

Do you wish to know in what the joys of heaven will consist ? That they will not be sensual, is certain. Of intellectual delights cull the best. I promise you, it will take some time to determine the best : the more thought the greater will be the difficulty of selection. You have settled this : imagine the highest, the superlative height of this delight. Well you have done that : now the next step is the bliss of heaven. Imagine again a degree beyond the superlative,—beyond the utmost stretch of your fancy. Impossible : cannot do so. Ah you are *just* right. *That* is the bliss of heaven, for from Scripture you may learn, it has never entered into the heart of man to conceive these joys. From my sojourning among the Saints, I had a peep behind the scenes ; and had an opportunity

of discovering that, like the heathen mystics, these also have their esoteric and exoteric doctrines; that what we call their jargon is a slang which to the initiated has its appropriate meaning for each word or expression. For example, Preaching and Teaching, in my simplicity, I thought signified much the same: no such thing. A controversy occurred among several Saints "I tell you it is—No it is n't: Brother A. says it is. No, he does not: look what Brother B. in his tract writes on the subject." There was much more of what we sinners would call squabbling; Saints, "a sifting of the truth." To cut a long affair short, out came the secret—Preaching is fulminating the thunders of the Lord against all unfortunates, whom the Saints deem unconverted;—in other words,—who do not belong to their household of faith. Teaching is entirely for the elect: and consists, if *genuine*, in delicious, self-laudatory, and soothing discourses, spreading over the hearers a kind of alloverishness: giving to all, especially to the females, a taste of rapture here below.

With Saints there is a morbid monomaniacal hankering after persecution, which is the stronger as this *degenerate* age obstinately refuses to gratify it. The cry, the prayer, the conversation is ever "of the wicked that trouble." This is the constant theme, even at the dinner table, whilst they guzzle and tuck in with might and main, as if for each Saint and Saintess it were the last meal. I have seen many of these creatures feeding, and can truly assert, whether male or female, I have seldom met a Saint with a delicate appetite.

"The wicked that trouble!" Yes, the jargon is translatable. Being persecuted now-a-days means, being restrained from persecuting others: not being allowed to cram down another's throat one's own opinions, religious or political, generally both.

There is not a Saint or Saintess who would not rejoice in persecution, provided however, it were not *too* sharp. They seem always to have some confused notions floating in their brains of how the early Christians bore testimony *for the truth*, before Magistrates. This idea may be derived from an indistinct recollection of Pliny's letter to Trajan regarding the spotless lives of the primitive Christians. Nothing I am convinced, would afford more joy and satisfaction to a Saint than to be shut up for a night in the watch house, and the next morning to bear testimony in Bow Street, for the faith in him.

Their chiefs encourage this feeling. The following quotation from a tract published by a leader of the Plymouth Brethren I give as a specimen: "Salvation by grace, through faith in His blood, is a doctrine for which I would gladly, through His help, lay down my life. For the sake of it, it has been needful for me to break many links, to lose many a friend whom once I valued. But I have never regretted the sacrifice." Is not this an exaggeration? I have never met with a person professing to be a Christian, and who had an acquaintance with the tenets of his religion, that did not hold this fundamental doctrine. Yet this man has the impudence to publish to the world that he has lost many valued friends on that account. Has the *courage* to tell Christians that he is ready to lay down his life, they of course taking it, for a doctrine they themselves hold. Poor fellow! will it be believed that this quotation appeared in print in the year of grace 1847; and at the very period that the whole Press of England was crying out against the admission of Jews into Parliament as detrimental to Christianity.

But I must pull up, lest this should be thought kicking against a fallen Champion. This leader has had a fall, a fatal one I fear. He has gone and done it. What? Married a sinner with money. She belongs not to his