

**CRIES FROM FIJI AND
SIGHINGS FROM THE SOUTH
SEAS. "CRUSH OUT THE BRITISH
SLAVE TRADE"; PP.4-124**

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by T. P. Lucas

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T. P. LUCAS

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CRIES FROM FIJI.

AND

Sighings from the South Seas.

"CRUSH OUT THE BRITISH SLAVE TRADE."

Being a Review of the Social, Political, and Religious Relations of the Fijians; a Consideration of the Policy of the English Government; the Prospects of the White Settlers; the Labour Traffic; and the Position and Duties of England to the Islands of the Pacific.

Copiously illustrated with Facts and Anecdotes.

BY

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The second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

The gospel of Civilization enunciates two dogmas, and hopes for heaven at last.

The first, "Do your duty in the position in which God has called you, and forget not to return thanks to your Creator."

The second, "Unto others do as you would they should do to you."

The latter gospel is a modified rendering of the former, and is essentially a creed of expediency, but in practice allows its devotees a wide latitude. Every man may do what seemeth right in his own eyes, provided he keep up an appearance of civilized respectability.

Christianity demands a complete surrender of the whole manhood in sacrifice to the Deity; the heart or affections; the mind or intelligence; the soul or life energies, both spiritual and physical; and the strength or utmost powers of all the capacities.

Civilization advises a respectable allegiance to the Divine, necessitating no self denial, but such as may stamp the man as a respectable citizen.

Christianity demands a perfect morality. Man is to love or regard, and treat his fellow-man, as himself, as far as duty and official responsibilities dictate. The precept is equally strict with man as with woman.

Civilization grants a large degree of licentiousness to man, provided he keep up a certain amount of outward respectability. For the sake of decency he must not go too far, or if he err, he must recompense to

a degree, so as to suppress the public appeals for redress, those whom he may wrong. But a stricter law is laid down for woman. And too often under this code, man, the wrong-doer, retains his position in society, his foremost seat in the social circle, and his mead of praise in the public life ; while woman, the wronged, is condemned in obloquy and shame to despair and destruction.

The gospel of Christianity prescribes commercial intercourse, but with clean hands, righteous dealings, just weights, fair prices, reasonable profits.

The gospel of Civilization also prescribes commercial intercourse, but allows clever trickery, sharp jobbery, smart dealings, poor articles, adulterated wares, only providing that the dealings must be covered by the cloak of respectability.

The animal nature of man, being essentially selfish, when refined and polished by education, inclines him to the dogmas of Civilization.

The spiritual nature should lead him upwards. But it is so subjected to the animal and selfish, that too often it degenerates downwards.

And so in life, we see three experiences. The animal nature, without education and knowledge, tends to sink man lower and lower—morally, socially, and intellectually.

The gospel of Civilization by education and refinement, seeks to buoy man on the surface of moral depravity, and to raise him socially and intellectually, to an atmosphere of respectability:

The gospel of Christianity seeks to raise him spiritually

and intellectually to a conception of the highest virtues and to the enjoyment of the purest vitality.

Thus while the spiritual sighs upwards, and the animal gropes downwards, there is necessitated in the breast of every man a mighty struggle. And it is only by super-human aid that the spiritual can rise triumphant, keep the animal in subjection, and advance daily by watchfulness and devotion, in intelligence, experience and refined purity. It is a struggle, a continuous, life-lasting struggle, and one leading the very best men over many falls and stumbles.

Since then purity and righteousness of so high a type are commanded as the acme of human aspirations and intelligence, and since those most highly favoured and most carefully nursed, inculcated and trained in the spirit and teachings of these gifts and graces, have so often failed, or come so vastly short, how shall we judge the heathen, or the wild man just issuing from the stone to the iron age? And the difficulty is increased, when we remember that opinions must vary, even as the higher or lower platforms from whence the judges view the moral and social landscape. And the different views held upon these matters would cause the several adherents to apply different remedies for the raising the depraved wild man of the South Seas. And so we found was practically the case in Fiji. On the one hand we learned that the Wesleyan missionaries had sought to raise the Viti man by heralding to him the gospel of Christianity; whereas, on the other hand, we learned that the English Government, and the white population largely, believed in bringing to bear upon the Fijian,

only the gospel of Civilization.

It did not require a long period or a very close investigation to discover that the advocates for the refining influences of civilization were inimical to the heralders of the gospel of Christianity. These self-denying men were almost universally blamed for all the ills and woes which had overtaken both black man and white in Viti-land. Although official documents are so often favourable, and although Sir H. Robinson acknowledged that it was through the peaceful conquest of the native races by this agency that Fiji was at length a Crown Colony, yet high officials too often privately sneer and pronounce Missions largely to be a failure. It is the old example of kicking away the ladder by which they climbed. The missionaries were maligned as having large salaries, and as having bought up land for little or nothing. I took special trouble in official quarters to test these questions, and found that the salaries received are lower than those of a carpenter, boatbuilder, or other mechanic of second class ability. I found that of forty-five missionaries, who had spent more or less of their best days in the islands, only three had bought land for their children. And surely, after these philanthropists had given their life energies and denied themselves the comforts of civilized society, not holding their lives dear to them, so as to tame these savages, it would have been a very small return to have received some land on which to settle their children. Yet such was the determined disinterested self-denial of these men, that only three accepted a small portion, and after long service.

It was further given out in official quarters, that the Capital was removed from Levuka to Suva because the Wesleyans refused the Government a piece of land, excepting at an outrageous price. Now, in Levuka, a large piece of the land belongs to the Mission. Sir Arthur Gordon was offered the piece of land in question at his own figure, or another piece as a present, the Mission Committee of Management feeling that the acceptance of such would increase the value of their other property. Sir Arthur refused the land, having previously determined to remove to Suva, a place with more accommodation, but as unhealthy a spot as he could very well have selected, and with a rainfall of 110 inches per annum. He wrote and denied that the mission was in any way the cause of the removing the Capital, but to this day officials repeat to the visitor the now stale calumny.

The planters and white settlers generally do not speak evil of the missionaries personally. In fact in early times the mission house was the place of refuge and safety against the warring or cannibal savages, and to-day very many are still houses of hospitality. But they are jealous of the mission. The natives will work for them with a willing service, but only grudgingly and for good wages for the whites. The missionary exerts more power and has more influence than the whites. But even here there is no ground for envy, as the missionaries simply have worked and continue to work disinterestedly for the well-being of the natives. And it is only natural that the natives should acknowledge, with some respect and affection, those to

whom they owe so much. While we can hardly wonder that they are distant and mistrusting to the whites, as a whole, seeing how often they have been previously bitten. The whites moreover blame the missions for raising the black man enough to make him troublesome and independent. But, after all, this raising is the result of a civilizing and not a Christianizing influence.

On the whole we found in Fiji, as in other young colonies, much civil and social unrest. The planters had misunderstandings with the sugar companies. The blacks were dissatisfied with the whites, jealous of the importation of Indian coolies, and other ways disaffected. While all classes were more or less dissatisfied with the policy, red-tapeism, and general actions of the Government.

On landing in Fiji, a number of natives came on board the ship and sought to be employed in carrying our luggage. One fine-looking, good-tempered, laughing Fijian obtained my promise to allow him to carry my belongings as soon as I could arrange as to lodgings, &c. By a mistake of the ship's officer, my box was brought up from the hold and sent to the Custom's House. I had to go for it as I wished to stow away in it packages which were loose in my cabin. My engaged native accompanied me. When I got to the Custom's House and explained the situation of affairs, a mere youth half screamed out in tones of authority and dignified pompousness, "Now then, how much tobacco have you in there?" I quietly answered that as I was neither a smoker nor a trader that I had none. "Now then, open the box and turn out the things." My native