

# **ROOTS, A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE**

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Roots, a plea for tolerance by George Robert Charles Herbert Pembroke

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**GEORGE ROBERT CHARLES HERBERT PEMBROKE**

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*Reprinted, with additions, from the "Temple Bar Magazine."*

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A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE



A NEW EDITION

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1888

## PREFACE

MY old man has told me that I am a fool for publishing these sketches ; and when he commits himself to such an opinion, there is generally, at least, a half truth in it.

But I have learnt some lessons from the thoughts I have tried to express in them, why should not other people? And, unless I am much mistaken, the reader can deduce almost any moral from them he pleases, according to the bias of his mind—that religion is essential and free-thinking useless, religion pleasant and free-thinking terrible—that utility and absolute truth should be looked upon as separate—that they should not—that thinking is but an idle waste of thought, and all is everything and everything is nought—that a sceptic is not necessarily the child of the devil—that the subject is so large, and so impossible for any really deep thinker to simplify and settle, that we should not be too hasty in



condemning our neighbours for disagreeing with us—that my young friend was a prig—that I am a fool—and half-a-dozen more, all calculated, as the poor boy would have said, to do good in various and perhaps contrary directions.

There is one defect in them which I am anxious to confess and apologise for ; that is, the apparent disregard of the accurate meanings of words. It is a stumbling-block that has been the cause of much misunderstanding even of the most careful and learned writers. To an unphilosophical person like myself the difficulty is almost hopeless, and I have been forced to attempt exactness by inexactness ; that is, by giving the same idea under several different verbal forms. I think in this I have been partially successful, and that any one who wishes to understand these conversations will not have much difficulty in doing so ; while those who wish to misunderstand and misrepresent them are welcome to that pleasure.

But the reader must pardon me for not seeing the weaknesses of my work as plainly as he does ; for when I am reading it, the awkward phraseology, the general rawness of composition, fade away before my eyes, and the rude drawing merges itself into the living pictures I knew and loved so well.

And to-day, of all others, I feel my critical powers lulled to sleep.

For we had buried him as he wished, on the very verge of the cliff of Farewell Point, on the spot where he and Mary and I had spent so many happy hours. For he had said half laughing, that he should not like to lie in a strange haunt ; that, however silly and heathenish it might seem, he liked the idea of the fresh, cool, southern breeze, that had wafted him so pleasantly to the happy islands in the tropics, singing through the trees over his grave, with the growl of the surf for ever in his ears ; with the kahawai frolicking in the sea close beneath, and the great sulky Stingarees floating about in the still water amongst the rocks, and the terns and the gannets swooping and screaming all round.

So we did as he wished ; and my old man and I wanted to put up a stone and an inscription to his memory ; but Mary, in her quiet, determined way, begged us to leave that to her, and to-day she took me up to see what she had done.

And with our feet in the soft waving grass, with the warm north wind singing in our ears, we stood for a long time silent, hand in hand, gazing with dim eyes at a rude tablet let into the trunk of the great tree, on which was written—

'BE HONEST : FEAR NOTHING : TRUST GOD.'

