

In this discussion of the Church in its social aspect, I seem to have indicated a steep and thorny path. The local church finds itself in a somewhat unresponsive and even hostile environment. This social phenomenon is apt to occur in the lower congested sections of our great towns. The church under this pressure tends to institutionalize. It supplements its ordinary methods with a system of social, educational, and philanthropic institutions with a view to conciliating the community in which it finds itself. These efforts are not directly and immediately promotive of the growth of the church, but may, for a time, even impede that growth, weaker natures being attracted by the prospect of social advantage, and stronger spirits desiring to go where they

can do good, instead of having good done to them. Church Institutionalism must be carried out on a large scale and in a spirit of varied and unwearied endeavor in order to produce any appreciable result. The altruistic spirit of the Master finding its expression in organized kindness, carried out by the church in a wholesale and systematic manner and persisted in long enough, ought in the end to remove prejudices existing in certain minds against Christianity. But we have to live long to enjoy the personal experience of such climatic changes. The church is a means, not an end. The important thing after all is not the building up of the church, but the Christianizing of the community.

## THE ETHICS OF HALL CAINE

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THE subject of our article may be considered as in the front rank of the few who, while shunning no natural phase of human emotion or passion, yet treat all the problems which human beings have to face in a thorough, true, and cleanly manner. The lessons conveyed in his writings make always for human good, and they may be accepted as types of pure and healthy romance. In his fiction he is morally and often spiritually didactic; the lessons which he teaches, directly and indirectly, are phases in modern terms of the great lessons of the Master, on which all worthy teaching must be based. For illustration of his views both his writings and his life furnish available evidence. Mr. Hall Caine has traveled much and in many lands, and has always been a diligent student, so that his experience of life and of the needs and dispositions of men and women is *au fond*. It will be generally known, too, that he has for many years taken an active part in rescue work, and so has

learned much respecting the baser and more seamy side of life and "pleasure." Such equipment for strenuous and useful labor, fortified by such varied experience, should be productive of good, and the reasoning of theory has been justified by the fact of his work.

The majority of his writings are "full" novels, something of the length of two ordinary novels. "Drink," tho a short book, has had a circulation running into hundreds of thousands. "My Story," which has lately been published, is autobiographical rather than an autobiography, and gives a remarkable insight to the life and character of his many friends and their influence on his life and work, and of the gradual growth of his mind and of his importance in the world as the success of each book gave him further opportunities. Its publication evoked remarkable encomiums from all sorts and conditions of men. Written in simple style, it might serve as a model for modest and sincere autobiography.

In his various works Mr. Caine, through the medium of his characters, persistently preaches on some principle of righteousness. And very often he indulges by this means in striking delineations of comparative religion. Here, for instance, is a dialog from his latest work, "The White Prophet," which very sharply draws the differentiation between Islam and Christianity:

What does Islam mean?

It means that the Egyptians, like all other Mohammedans, are cut off by their religion from the spirit and energy of the great civilized nations; that, swathed in the bands of the Koran, the Moslem faith is like a mummy, dead to all uses of the modern world

What does Islam mean?

It means slavery, seclusion of women, indiscriminate divorce, unlimited polygamy, the breakdown of the family, and the destruction of the nation. Well, what happens? Civilization comes along, and it is death to all such dark ways. What next? The scheming sheikhs, the corrupt pashas, the tyrannical caliphs, all the rascals and rogues who batten on corruption, the fanatics who are opponents of the light, cry out against it. Either they must lose their interests or civilization must go! What then? Civilization means the West: the West means Christianity. So "Down with the Christians! O Moslems, help us to kill them!"

One of the salient characteristics of Mr. Caine's style is its many-sided frankness. He is greatly given to exposing ethical defects. In "The White Prophet" one of the characters speaks thus:—

His was a religion of peace, but while your Christian Church prays for unity and concord among the nations, your Christian States are daily increasing the instruments of destruction. His was a religion of poverty, but while your Christian priests are saying, "Blest are the meek," your Christian communities are struggling for wealth and trampling upon the poor in their efforts to gain it. Ishmael Ameer believes that if your great Master came back now He would not recognize in the civilization known by His name the true posterity of the little faithful Church He founded on the shores of the Lake of Galilee.

And in the following dialog, again

from "The White Prophet," the strain is almost homiletic:—

"Ishmael Ameer sees," said the Chancellor, "that the thing known to the world as Christian civilization is little better than an organized hypocrisy, a lust of empire in nations, and a greed of gold in men, destroying liberty, morality, and truth. Therefore, he warns his followers against a civilization



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which comes to Egypt, to the East, with religion in one hand and violence and avarice in the other."

"You think, too," said Gordon, whose breathing was now quick and loud, "that Ishmael Ameer is an apostle of the soul of Islam—perhaps of the soul of religion itself, without respect of creed; one of the great men who come once in a hundred years to call the world back from a squalid and sordid materialism, and are ready to live, aye, and to die, for their faith—the Savonarolas, the Luthers, the Jamel-el-dins, perhaps the Mohammeds, and," dropping his voice, "in a sense, the Christs?"

"We pretend to believe that 'it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven,' yet we are nearly all trying, strug-



gling, fighting, scrambling to be rich. Is the man to be silenced who warns the world that such sordid and squalid materialism is swallowing up religion, morality, and truth? Such a man may be the very soul of a country, yet what do we do with him? We hang him, or stone him, or crucify him—that's what we do with him, sir."

"No, sir; Judas was only the cat's-paw, scorned through all the ages and burned in a million effigies, but nearly as innocent of the death of his Master as you or I. The real betrayer was the High Priest of the Jews. He was the head of the bad system which Christ came to wipe out, and he saw that if he did not destroy Jesus, Jesus would destroy him. What did he do? He went to the Governor, the Consul-General of the Roman occupation, and said, 'This man is setting himself up against Cæsar. If you let him go on you are not Cæsar's friend.'"

"Well?"

"That's what the High Priest of Islam is doing in Egypt now. As I was going into the Agency yesterday I met the Grand Kadi coming out. You know what he is, sir—the most fanatical supporter of the old dark ways: slavery, divorce, polygamy, all the refuse of bad Mohammedanism."

"Well, well?"

"Well, my father told me the Grand Kadi had said, 'If you let Ishmael Ameer go on it will be death to the rule of England in Egypt.'"

When an author is animated by a righteous purpose his strength is increased, even if the design of his work be consequently lessened in general scope. It is as tho there was an analogy of natural laws.

Compare this concentration of force upon a smaller surface with the working-principle of a lens which gathers rays from far sources and throws the accumulated results into one resultant ray of commanding force. Hall Caine has been given many talents, like the man in the parable, and he finds it a duty to use them for human good. Here we touch the twofold use of fiction; to inculcate the good as well as to criticize and chastise the evil; and in addition to warn against existing danger those whose feet are already moving toward doubtful places. This has become a

habit with him—the expression as an author of his feelings, duties, and acts as a man. He is distinctly "on the side of the angels." In some of his works he uses the weight of his pen, as in real life he uses an eloquent voice, to aid the fallen. In his reminiscent volume, "My Story," he says:—

It was not a bad apprenticeship for a novelist to live amid associates like these, but I think I can say with truth that what I prize most, as the result of the experience of those days, is the tenderness it left for the poor and the oppressed, especially the oppressed among women and girls, whose suffering utters a cry which even yet threatens to drown for me all the other sounds of life.

This is what may almost be spoken of as the formal setting forth of his thesis. It is illustrated by fictional example in "The Manxman," in "The Eternal City," where the eternal problem is explained from within; and in "The Christian," where tendency and temptation are dealt with in a way that is severely educational, despite its charming and interesting realism.

The little volume called "Drink" is in real truth a sermon put in the attractive form of narrative. The name is the thesis, the story a poignant example of the evils of a self-indulgence which not only destroys ultimately the body but also saps the moral nature and makes havoc of the soul.

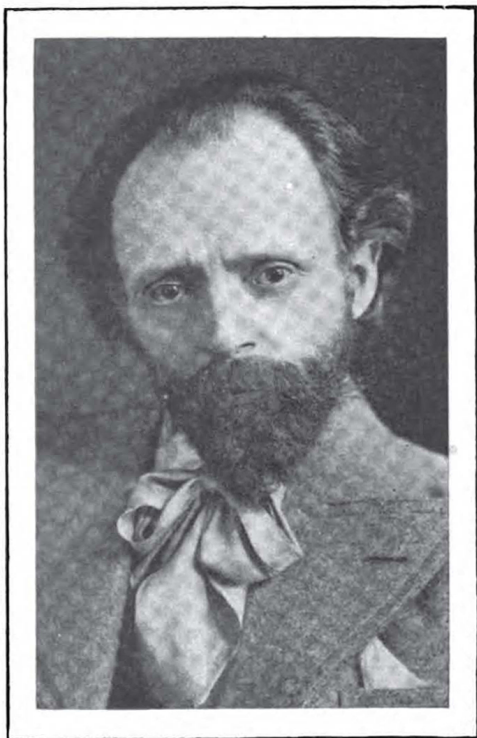
Hall Caine has the gift of eloquence, and whenever he makes use of it he exhibits a convincing quality which is rare indeed. Part of the secret of this is undoubtedly his intense earnestness. It is as tho the latter is a force with an explosive power of its own. There surely must be some root-force in all forms of dynamics, explaining why it is that strong feeling in oneself is the cause of feeling of varying degrees in others. Certain it is that those who have heard Hall Caine speak in moments of oratorical—perhaps spiritual—emotion can realize that he is not of ordinary caliber. They may have faults to find in him, his conception, his

methods; but despite all they have to acknowledge the existence of some great power or quality, rare in itself and of mighty import when linked with a fine imagination.

A gift implies a duty; and a duty implies self-sacrifice, if only in the shape of labor. The latter sense of duty is a part of Hall Caine's equipment. He has always answered its call, both in real life and in the world of literature. The result is that to-day he stands high as a force for good in the esteem and in the minds of those who are earnest. In fact, he has won a position which is almost unique. To the vast mass of the public his is a name to conjure with. To them he is a personality, and stands in their regard almost as a national asset. Perhaps he has not with him to so great an extent the members of the aristocracy as those of the commonalty. For he is no great admirer of "society" as such, and "smart" society is obnoxious to him, as may be seen in any of his works where comment may be made or inferred. He is a believer in the natural good side of humanity as well as in the Creator of it. That does not mean a belief that humanity is all good, but that there is good potential—slumberous—now and again obscured by weakness or nullified by evil passions or the inherent base desires of humanity. In most of his books he deals with great passions which override the ordinary rules of life, and for which great price must in the long run be paid, but he never hounds his erring female characters to doom as George Eliot so pitilessly and invariably does. These fictitious illustrations of the working of the laws of good and evil are based on truth. Not only are they colored with experiences of life which have come under his own observation as a man and as a journalist, but the general schemes of such are taken from stories in Bible history or parable. He says of this subject, in his book "My Story":—

When I began to think of a theme I found

four or five subjects clamoring for acceptance. There was the story of "The Prodigal Son," which afterward became "The Deemster," the story of Jacob and Esau, which in the same way turned out "The Bondsman," the story of Samuel and Eli, which after a fashion



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molded itself finally into "The Scapegoat," as well as half a dozen other stories, chiefly Biblical, which have since been written or are still on the forehead of the time to come.

In the thrilling chapter of "The Eternal City" entitled "The Pope," Mr. Caine puts into the mouth of one of his characters the following characterization:—

My heart aches when I think of the evils which may come to our beloved country as a result of these outrages. The real bulwark between the people and their oppressors should be the Church, but the Church is hopeless in that interest and is past praying for. In the midst of a social ferment such as the world has never witnessed before, what, in God's name, is the Church doing? Singing anthems and misereres in Basilicas, administering and receiving sacraments, with her priests in copes of brodered gold, while a



great part of the world is dying of moral and physical starvation! No matter! God is good, and He will not allow Himself to be deceived by some words in Latin and two lighted candles.

The most fascinating of all Mr. Caine's works from the religious point of view is his little volume "The Little Manx Nation." A considerable section of this treatise is occupied with a most enthusiastic laudation of the celebrated Bishop Thomas Wilson. Of this prelate Mr. Caine fondly speaks as "my hero." Speaking of the discipline of the Church, Mr. Caine says that if in the early part of the eighteenth century it were lost elsewhere it might be found in all its force in the Isle of Man.

Hall Caine labors ceaselessly; he is a firm believer that in order to achieve excellence truth should pervade all things. He holds, following the lesson of the Master, that illustration by methods overtly and ostensibly fictional

is not untruth; and so throughout every page he writes there is at least verisimilitude, if not the duplication of accepted fact. Some day, if it is not so now, it will be recognized that this earnest, imaginative, strenuous man—who began life without any material advantage whatever; who carved every step upward to his present place among the foremost men of his country and of the world; who in the doing has incidentally won fortune which he never courted, and position which he never aimed at—is a teacher of many good things, and that the world is richer and wiser and better because he has lived in it.

The sale of his books has run into millions. Above all things he must have the supreme satisfaction of knowing, whenever he may think of it, that his work is good work, which, like all good things, never ceases to be of benefit to others.

## AMERICAN THEOLOGY AS SEEN BY A SCOTTISH THEOLOGIAN\*

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It is always difficult for a person of one nationality to enter into the thoughts and feelings, the creative and practical impulses, of another people. The Anglo-Saxon origin of a great part of the American nation does not do away with the fact that there is on that side of the Atlantic a fund of fresh, vigorous life, expressing itself in new and original ways, which the more sober spirit of Scotch or English thought finds it difficult to understand. In essentials, no doubt, it must be granted that the problems arising in religion and theology in America and in Britain are much the same, as springing from the same general philosophical, scientific, and critical conditions, and they generate fundamentally

the same types of thought and belief—conservative and radical. But in America, perhaps, the contrasts are more acute, because people are, on the one side, more resolute and tenacious in defense of every jot and tittle of what they hold to be the inheritance of the past, and, on the other, more fearless and enterprising when they break with old traditions, and strike out in new directions. A Scotchman, if he adopts radical ideas, generally tries in some way to connect them with evangelical beliefs, and church traditions. The American, smitten with the force of some new conception, has less scruple in cutting himself away from older ideas and launching out into untried waters. In America, there-

\* Topic and title suggested by the editors.