

# Laconics of Cult

## I. SUPERSTITION

By INGERSOLL LOCKWOOD

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The gods that exist are born of those that exist no longer. — *Rig-Veda*.

The idea which man calls "god" only exists in the consciousness of man himself. — *Bulwer-Lytton*.

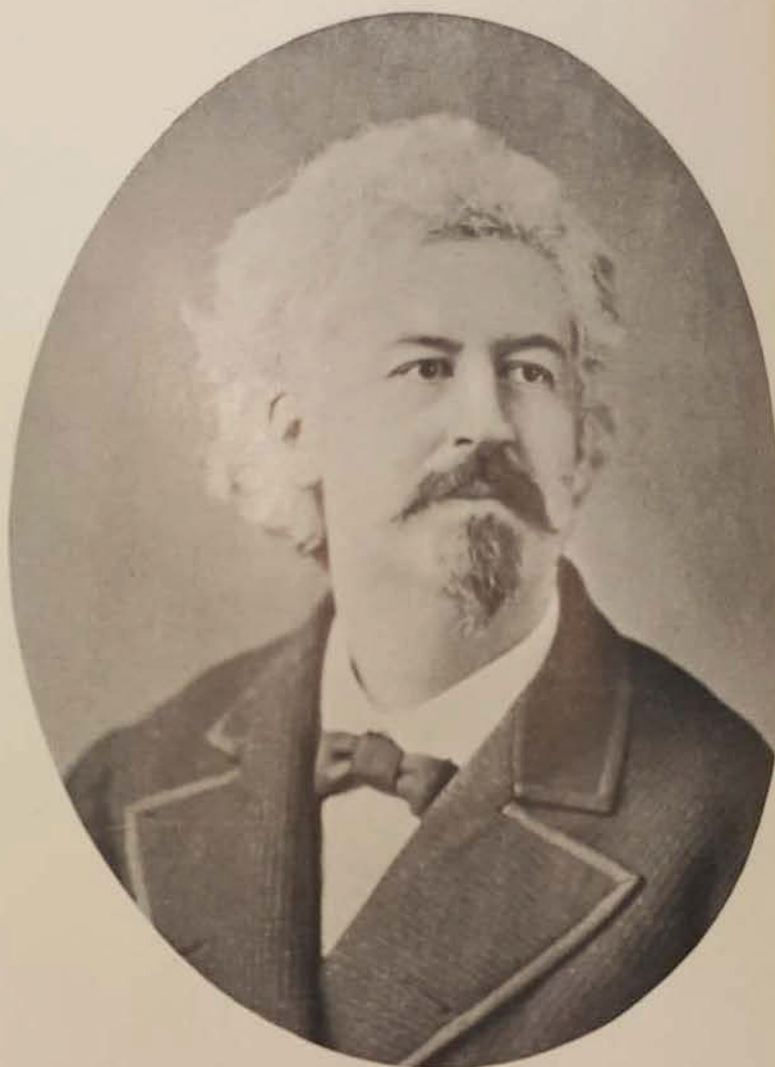
We do not resemble him, he resembles us. — *Ibid*.



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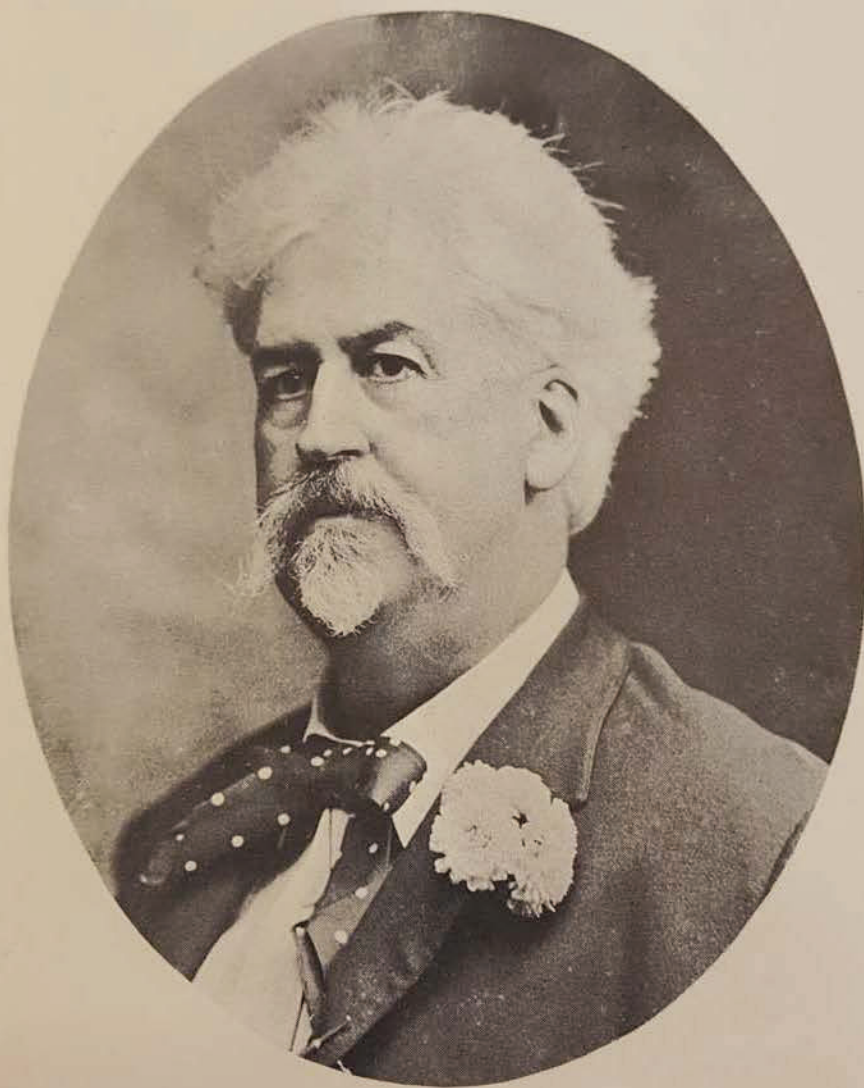
LAWYER AND LITTERATEUR

(At the age of 30)



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INGERSOLL LOCKWOOD

AUTHOR AND ORIGINATOR OF THE CULT OF THE IMMORTAL HUMAN

(At the age of 60)



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### PROEM

THERE is but one form of human enslavement more villainous and more detestable than the chains of the tyrant or the shackles of the despot, and that is the enslavement of the human mind under ecclesiastical tyranny, whose cowering and crouching victims at the crack of the priestly lash are driven from the cultivation of their own intelligence, from the custody of their own thoughts, from the guardianship of their own souls, and who, like whipt dogs, trembling and whining in abject submission at the feet of the oppressor, lick the very hand that wields the lash. I'm well aware what a thankless task it is to attack the established order of things, theological, political or ethical, for in my long life I have often heard raised the old cry in different form: Great is Diana of the Ephesians! but I make no excuse or apology for my little book.

If it shall turn a single man or woman away from the old path of Superstition, for so many centuries beaten hard and smooth by the tread of millions of poor tired human feet pressing forward in the dust of outworn ecclesiastical "props" that line the way in search of something they never can find, I will be satisfied.

I owe this dear country something for my enjoyment all these years of the priceless privilege of liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and this be my gift to my





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## SUPERSTITION

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countrymen, for I set no copyright upon it; it belongs to anybody who can use it, and if the clerics, theologs, sacerdotes, *et id omne genus*, can't bless it — which I should hardly expect, let them use it as a remedy for torpid liver and heartily curse it.

I have only one favor to ask of any man or woman who may pick it up, and that is: Read it through before you pass judgment upon it.

I'm entitled to that much consideration anyway. If monarchs only had the time to read the petitions tremblingly handed up to them, there would be more justice done in the world.

INGERSOLL LOCKWOOD.

*Saratoga Springs, N. Y.,*

*May 1, 1910.*



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## SECTION FIRST

### SUPERSTITION

I HAVE often pictured to myself the last priest of imperial Rome, standing in an attitude of superb dignity by the side of his altar and saying to his Christian successor, who had entered the Roman temple with some fear and trembling — even though a squad of converted soldiers was at his heels, to take possession of the premises: *Moriturus, te saluto!* and then adding with a long and deep-drawn sigh: And yet, O Christian brother, it will be but a change in form and not in substance, for all religions are the same, being the offspring of man's brain, they cannot differ greatly. The people must have their *lares* and *penates* in their homes and their statues and images in the temples, they must have at the hand of the priest their signs, wonders, miracles just as they look for their *panem et circenses* at the hands of the political leaders: or else thou wilt lose control. How were it possible to make a sublimer god than our Father Jove, god of gods. *Zeu kudiste, megiste, kelainephes, aïtheri naion!* (Thou Jove, most honored, greatest of all, wrapt in thy dark majesty, dweller in infinite space!) Canst thou improve upon our cloud-encircled heaven, set high above the reach of man, with its wondrous glory of light and color, echoing to the deafening crash of Jove's thunder-bolts or



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lighted up by the blinding flash of his lightnings as he robs some blasphemer of his sight forever? It has often been tried, but the world comes ever back to us for our recipe.

Be kind to the beloved messengers of our gods, Olympian servitors, the dainty Iris, the exquisite Psyche, the sweet boy Eros, the wingèd Mercury, guide and comfort of departed souls, thou wilt need them all, for even gods must be served. Turn not from our sacred Vestal Virgins, keepers of the altar fires. They are greatly beloved of the people. Even the rude soldiers bend and kiss their shadows as they pass.

"We do! we do!" muttered the warriors of the squad, and then suddenly remembering their new faith, a deep scarlet shone through the dark visages tanned by Africa's sun. "Brother," continued the priest, "thou wilt need a Queen of Heaven. I cannot too highly recommend our superb Juno, guardian of the marriage tie. It is to her we owe our matchless Roman mothers.

I know little of thy Jewish demi-god. We do not love the Jews in this imperial capital. They are the butt of our ridicule on the stage, sodden in credulity and superstition. Our great poet Horace says: *Credat Judæus Apella!* but I have read in the *Acta Diurna* that your new god's birthday falls in the latter part of December. Our *Saturnalia*, a favorite festival with our people, falls upon the 16th, 17th and 18th of that month, so it would be the simplest thing in the world to unite the two. The people must have their religious pomps and parades. Our slaves, too, will not be satisfied without this brief relaxation of their servitude.





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And finally, brother, I commend to thy adoption these beautiful altars and priestly vestments. O noble show! O stately ministrations of which our Imperial Master the Emperor, our Supreme Pontiff, is so justly proud. It were impossible to increase its beauty and magnificence. Take, O brother, what the world summons us to surrender and farewell. Once again I cry: *Moriturus, te saluto!* ”

As he turned from the altar, a great crowd of acolytes, augurs, choristers, thurifers, train-bearers and the like swarmed out and fell upon their knees. The stately sacerdote moved away, with his head of Apollo high in the air, his right hand uplifted, with thumb and first and second fingers extended, his superb seal ring bearing a Jove's head upon it glistening in the dim light. The crowd of ministrants followed him forth in dead silence.

When they had disappeared, the Christian priest made a sign to the soldiers to fall back, and taking out from under his gown a small silver vessel containing water and an aspersorium, he besprinkled the top and sides of the altar, muttering prayers the while, and then with many wavings of the hand, which the soldiers watched half shamefacedly, he sank upon his knees, the blood-stains of the last sacrifice scarcely dry upon the white marble floor beneath him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recipe to make a god:

Take 33 1-3 per centum Ignorance, 33 1-3 Credulity and 33 1-3 Human Ingenuity. Mix carefully and let stand until fermentation sets in. Then add *quant. suf.*



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extract of the Miraculous, and vary strength of the mixture to suit powers of resistance of locality.

This is the recipe that has been in use from the very beginning of time and it may be justly termed a specific. When Jove was first set up in business as a *deus deorum*, that is, as the absorber of many smaller gods, he proved to be altogether too harsh a remedy for the peoples to whom it was administered. Prometheus undertook the task of reforming him. It was a severe struggle, but Prometheus succeeded admirably and eventually made Jove one of the grandest, noblest and honestest gods that the world has ever seen. The same thing happened with Jahveh, the Jewish god. Before the Christians could accept him, he had to be completely made over, severely disciplined, stript of many of his old habits and put under bonds as to his future behavior. Then he was rechristened Jehovah.

Allah likewise, as first designed by Mahomet was not at all acceptable to the Arabians. The god-maker was given very plainly to understand that radical changes must be made in the character, attributes and pretensions of Allah in order to make him acceptable to the people. This was done, and to-day a hundred million human beings answer to his call for prayers.

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As the stream cannot rise higher than its source, it follows very naturally that no god can outlive the civilization that creates him. There is an exception to this general rule and that is in the case of an old god made over, "modernized" in fact, for the use of a succeeding civilization. This accounts for Jahveh's long reign



other old gods have gone into eternal night, gods who were once contemporary with him, and even more powerful and active than he was. For instance, we may ask: Where are the gods of old, the gods of mighty Egypt,

Osiris, Apis, Orus and their crew,

under whose reign the arts and sciences achieved such results as even now to astound the world? Where is ibis-headed Thoth, jackal-headed Anubis, the "lackey" of the gods of his day as Mercury was of his? Where are these old, old gods, from whom Moses pilfered his knowledge of mystical lore? All dissolved into finer and more impalpable dust than the kings, commons and slaves who worshipped you.

O ye gods, ye gods, whether ye sit on great white thrones resting on no more substantial foundation than a summer cloud, or whether ye reign in the Tartarean vaults of dusky Hades, ye must some day, some day, go down to your twilight and to your eternal night!

And I may ask too: Where is Jove, magnificent Jove, that "divine gentleman" under whose superb reign the world attained to its dizziest heights of art, literature, philosophy and mathematical science? O thou glorious masterpiece of human ingenuity, thou "awful Jove, whom young Phidias brought from no vain or shallow thought," whose head remains to-day the very mould and pattern of all really great gods, benignant, just and sensible enough not to kick against the pricks of Fate,

O where art thou?

Faded like clouds from the sky,  
To share no more in our mortal strife





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gossamer veil in the rays of moonlight, there Nature unrolled her spectral arch of beauty.

And thou sayst also, that thou didst snatch certain mortals, Enoch and Elijah, from the face of the earth without letting them see death. Knowest thou not that other gods had done the same, that the people expected these things from them, that Father Jove often showed his power by performing such wonderful acts, as witness his taking of the beautiful boy Ganymede, and his lifting to the stars many others who had died on earth, and admitting them into the theocorp!

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Not a despot, tyrant, oppressor of the people or contemner of the rights of man but claims to hold his throne by "divine right," to be the "anointed" of some god, to be entitled by special dispensation of heaven to set his heel upon the necks of his fellow men. Not a driver of slaves, robber of the toil of man or millionaire who greases the axles of his chariot wheels with the marrow of human bones, that doth not "love God," is not as regular to prayer call as any Mussulman that ever clove a dog of a Christian with his scimitar and wiped the blade on his shirt to wear the crimson seal as a testimony of his zeal in Allah's service, and doth not with a feeling of self-beatitude make punctual payment of his tithes to maintain the due and godly service of altar, chancel, choir, incense and priestly robes and the richly-walled temple that doth enclose them all, for the glorification of an imaginary being whom they have set up for selfish purposes. Think you that this "establishment" will ever rid men



of their distrust of each other, ever equalize conditions so that abject poverty shall not gaze with hatred and defiance at the curtained windows of the rich, with curses for those within? Never! never! so long as men turn not from the false gods of Superstition to the real ones of human love, human sympathy, human mutual assistance. Look at our sister Republic of France! The "establishment" has existed within her limits from the second century of the common era. In the due course of time, it spread to every nook and corner of the land, permeated every stratum of life from the highest to the lowest, no crack or crevice escaped it. It stood in the hovel, in the home, in the castle, in the palace. Man opened and closed his eyes on the crucifix. Childhood's tiny hands told off its beads. Cowlèd monks and dark-garbed nuns and sisters were here, there and everywhere. The priest made choice of school books; no morsel entered human mouths without the sign of the cross. The trembling wretch listened to his sentence of death often for unsubstantiated accusation, beneath the shadow of the bleeding Prince of Peace nailed to his beam. Kings and princes trembled at the anathema of Rome. From cradle to grave, the priest, the eternal priest was in power, the guardian of thoughts and consciences. He knew all, saw all, excused, approved or condemned all, and what was the result of this reign of god? Or, had I not better say, of this mad and unrestrained riot of Superstition? Every other human being living and breathing in that god-favored land to-day was born out of wedlock. But at last an awakening has come. Superstition has been toppled from



its gilded niche and human reason has every chance of coming to its own again.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the name of common sense, why did man ever set up these shadowy tyrants to tease, worry and torment him? The answer is a very simple one: If you chain even an intelligent dog in the moonlight, he will bay at it; if you shut a child in a dark room, he will tremble and send forth a cry of terror; if you place a savage in a position to look upon any great convulsion of nature's forces, he will shiver and cower in abject fear — dog, child and savage, all three, stand upon about the same plane of evolution. The dog runs to his master, the child to its parent, the savage to its idol of baked mud — for protection, the dog with its caress, the child with its kiss of thankfulness, the savage with his gift of food to appease the evil spirit.

In other words, the first god that man set up was an attempt to appease the wrath of nature. The progression was easy. In a higher grade of mental development when the primitive man moved his habitation hither and thither he came into contact with more varied forms of Nature's apparent unfriendliness to him. The earth quaked beneath his feet, the avalanche slipt with thunderous roar down the mountain side, the skies emptied their stores of hailstones upon his head, the thunderbolt split the towering monarch of the forest, the rivers overflowed and swept his frail habitation away, the earth spouted boiling water, the volcano spat fire, and the wind blast whipt the ocean into the white foam of an all-threatening rage. The "medicine-man" was not



slow to take advantage of the situation. He encouraged the sacrifice of food to the idol of baked mud, for man is quick to shift the burden of toil upon his fellow man, and later, when the meat sacrifice came into vogue, the "medicine-man" found his larder well stored, for surely no one should feed upon the consecrated food, save himself. In our day of more refined Superstition, the consecrated wine that is left over must be drunk by the ministrant. Now you are in a position to understand why the odor of the roasting flesh of lamb and kid was so pleasing to Jahveh, and why Goethe makes Mephisto assure Faust that the church hath power to digest any kind of offering. And mark well that, while primitive man's abject fear in the presence of Nature's convulsions was perfectly natural, yet the subtle and ever increasing encouragement of his Superstition by the "medicine-man" and his "successors and assigns" was the first act of human tyranny that was destined to take on such vast strength and colossal proportions as to crowd the crowned and sceptred despot quite out of business. And now, even in this free land of ours, where Liberty sits enthroned in superb majesty and the rights of man are graven in large letters on brazen tablets, the rabbi, prelate, sacerdote, clergyman, priest, parson and their thousands of assistants, curates, deacons, acolytes, clerics, elders and presbyters stand ready upon the slightest attempt to loosen their hold upon the people, to raise the old cry in different words: Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Great is Diana of the Ephesians!





But after all, Jahveh is but a machine god to be wheeled out as occasion may demand, and 999 times out of a thousand to cover with his name and majesty and with the additional prestige of some members of the theocorp — such as Hamlet called upon: “Angels and ministers of grace!” — some act of human meanness, some bit of hypocrisy, some impending intent to do an unethical act; e. g. to curse an enemy — in which case one commonly sees not only Jahveh himself but the leading members of the theocorp dragged out *ad hoc*; to cover up a perjury about to be committed, or some wrongful act against a fellow man for whom the jurant’s affection or friendship hath cooled, or against one whom he is about to deceive for some selfish purpose, in which case he calls loudly upon Jahveh to *teste* as the lawyers say the righteousness of his intentions.

Or, it may be the drawing of Jahveh’s name into play is for the purpose of sanctifying some very act forbidden by the god himself, such as war, pillage, robbing or wronging a weaker foe.

Or, in the mouths of the sacerdotes to curse the unbeliever, non-conformer, or person indifferent to his circumstantial and ornate anathema, or to the sanctity of his excommunication by book, bell and candle.

The old German emperor during the Franco-German war never failed to thank god upon any special occasion when a particularly large number of Frenchmen were slain in battle by the long range Krupp guns which had been perfected by this god-fearing nation for the very purpose of getting even with the *rothe Hosen* for the Napoleonic invasion of the fatherland. Now





fectly logical, when the sacerdots, as they do in their almost daily commendation of their god as "omnipotent," pledge him (of course for value received) as safe and sure to be depended upon in any emergency, why should not the poor Frenchmen have treated their god in the same way as the African savages do theirs when he leaves them in the lurch in a pitched battle against a neighboring tribe, to wit: tie ropes around the necks of their idols and drag them through the filth and mud and mire to punish them for not doing their duty and living up to representations made by the medicine men? Possibly the sacerdots sometime in the near future may be forced to say of the proclaimed attribute of omnipotency as the proprietors of storage warehouses do of the words "Absolutely fireproof," that they are not to be taken as a guarantee but as being "merely descriptive."

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Alas, poor mortals, how ye did cudgel your brains, in your attempts to make your gods worthy of the name. Homer, in the Iliad, makes the wounded Mars roar like ten thousand ordinary men, so that both Greeks and Trojans flee in nameless terror. When a wounded god falls he covers several lots of land. Even Minerva is built upon such a generous scale that when she puts on Pluto's helmet, her head is large enough to fill the vast casque. Homer lets his gods be wounded, but it is impossible to kill them, their veins being filled with ichor and not with blood. The Jews, too, were always possessed of the idea that a god must be of gigantic build. So we find that when Moses hid in the cleft in





the rock and Jahveh walked by, he covered Moses with one hand, so that would make him about thirty-six feet tall. The statue of the Olympian Jove by Phidias, one of the wonders of the world, was thirty-five in height from its base. This seems to have been about the standard height of gods. As a god Jahveh was very careful never to let Moses see his face. In the burning bush he only showed his back, and, as he walked away from the cleft in the rock, Moses was directed to be satisfied with a rear view. When the Greek gods mingled with mortals, they were often recognizable by the wonderful luminosity of their eyes. Telemachus, in his first interview with Minerva, suspected at once that the stranger was a god, but he could not tell which one it was. Virgil had a notion that you could tell a goddess by her walk.

To give an idea of sublimity to Jahveh the Jews were wont to make use of expressions well calculated to impress the superstitious minds of the people, such as: He maketh the clouds his chariot; he walketh on the wings of the wind; at his voice of thunder the very waters flow up the mountain sides; he looketh on the earth and it trembleth; he toucheth the hills and they smoke, and so on *ad lib.*

Father Jove wraps the gigantic *manes* of Hercules in a cloud and bears him away from earth in a four-horse chariot.

Jahveh, in translating Elijah, made use of a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and wafted them up to heaven by means of a whirlwind. Jove sent his eagle after the beautiful boy Ganymede, which snatched him away from the very midst of his playfellows on Mount Ida.



Deification or lifting to the stars, as practised by Father Jove, had in view either the reward of those mortals who had suffered through the purity and constancy of their affections, such as Psyche, Callisto and her son, whom Father Jove snatched away and placed in the starry firmament as the Great and Little Bear; but more particularly those he lifted to the stars were the great benefactors of the human race, such as Astræa, the pure and lovely daughter of Themis, goddess of Justice and Law, counsellor of Jove himself. Astræa, goddess of innocence and purity, was removed from the wicked world and placed by Jove among the stars as Virgo, The Virgin. Cadmus the inventor of letters and Hercules the slayer of monsters that oppress man were also lifted to the stars. This system of deification of mortals as practised by Jehovah, the reformed and etherealized Jahveh, under and by direction of his sacerdotes, has been and is the mere encourager of Superstition. Not services to mankind are here the moving cause, but the greater or less muscular callosity resulting from long-continued prayer. One of these instances is that Simon Stylites of the 5th century, who remained alive for twenty-six years on the top of a column exposed naked to the elements. To describe the horrid depth of Superstition to which his worshippers sank in their baleful ignorance would defile any decent page. A lover of his kind can only emit a groan of despair. Nor has the hand of the new world been listless or idle in the art of theotecture. During the Toltec and Aztec civilization of Mexico, a very extensive and intricate theocorp, under the guidance and management of an





army of priests, was in existence at the time of the arrival of that monster of cruelty Cortez, who was in fact at first taken to be the Toltec messiah; no doubt from his white skin, for his smoking and flaming hell of a heart was not visible. The god Taotl was at the head of this theocorp, with thirteen assistant gods and two hundred inferior deities, under the command of their frightful Mars, Huitzilopochtli, compared to whom the Greek god was a calf-eyed infant of tenderness. Even highly civilized peoples like their gods terrible in threat and execution. But some will exclaim — for, with a strange incongruity in his nature, man, though a liberty-loving creature, yet rather than do his own thinking and bear himself the cares of state, clings to the very yoke that his oppressor lays upon his neck — Why is it that there are so few cries of *nescio deos!*

In addition to the reason above stated there are many others: The sacerdotes have so corrupted human nature that at the least show of indifference or contempt the priest balances anathema in his hand like Father Jove ready to cast a bolt, and the parson threatens eternal damnation. Then again, man's ever present distrust of woman's virtue comes in. No matter to what horrid depths of Superstition so-called religion may descend, he calmly adds: It is good for them, women need such a shoe on their wheels in the steep descents of life. And another reason is that any and all worship of so-called celestial beings forms a most admirable shield and cover for that most despicable of all human weaknesses, hypocrisy. And last, that terrible demon Ignorance, who



bears, suckles and hugs to her bosom with fiendish delight that favorite child of hers, Superstition, is always a lover of the gods. I need hardly call your attention to the fact that, outside of these and any and all other reasons why god-systems have been and are so tenacious of life, is that death, and that, too, in its most awful forms, until very recent years, awaited the so-called blasphemer who even privately denounced the worship of gods as mere Superstition or asserted that all such shadowy beings are but the children of men's dread of malign spirits.

But the truth is that all down through the centuries the great thinkers, philosophers, investigators and scientists have, with never ceasing iteration and reiteration, denounced as Superstition the theory that there are any such beings as "gods" sitting up in the clouds or anywhere else, or that there ever had been any need of such "creators," that Nature showed herself to be a gradual growth, sublimely regular and systematic, with never a *saltum*, from the simplest germs endowed only with movement, to the magnificent mind of man crowning this unfolding of countless millions of years.

Lord Robert Bulwer-Lytton, in the contemplation of this question of so-called celestial beings, expresses himself in these calm but eloquent phrases:

The idea which man calls "god" only exists in the consciousness of man himself. Though we should take the wings of morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, yet we can find nothing there which we have not carried with us. Whether we scale the heights or sound the depths, mount up into heaven or go down





into hell, we are equally unable to travel out of our own thoughts or attain to any point of space beyond the reach of it. Nay, space itself and time are not things or even the qualities of things; they are only our manner of thinking of things, the modes and conditions of our consciousness.

We are not the masterpieces of a supreme being who has formed us in his own image, but our idea of such a being we have formed in the image of ourselves. We do not resemble him; he resembles us.

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It will be urged that even Voltaire died professing a belief in a god and that he erected a church at Ferney bearing the inscription: *Deo erexit Voltaire*. The answer to this is that the time had not yet come to cry *Nescio deos!* Voltaire made a bold fight against Superstition (*L'infame*), and he was satisfied with that. The Republic of France is reaping the good effects of that fight this very moment. Could he have known that Nature put the sea-shells on the tops of the Alps (and not the priests, as he charged), he could have died happy.

But Science was too young for that. A whole century was to elapse before Nature was to be allowed to cry out: Take courage, O my children, 'tis I, I who have done it all! For millions and millions of years have I been occupied with this work! From infinitesimal beginnings, step by step, until thou, Man, O my child, with thy wonderful Consciousness, standest as the crown and ornament of my unfolding, have I evolved the Universe! Put aside thy gods as children put aside



their puppets of kid and sawdust, when they discover that I, Mother Nature, can lay children of flesh and blood in their arms! Tear aside the veils of the "holies of holies"! They are but the cabinets of the wonder-working spiritualists!

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In the difficult art of setting up a new god, Mahomet the Arabian is undoubtedly *facile princeps*, for the difficulties he had to contend with were appalling. So far as sacred things, so called, went, it was in his land a period of utter indifference. Comic poets amused themselves launching satirical verses, often of an obscene nature, at the supernatural beings then in vogue. But in Homer's day the poets were not above this sort of business, as witness the amours of Mars and Venus as sung by Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, deemed by so many critics as utterly unworthy of the great bard.

Had the sentimental founder of the Christian mythus been in Mahomet's place, there would be no Christianity to-day. However, in one respect they resembled each other, for they both realized that setting up a new god was not a money-making scheme. Some one must put his hand into his pocket to pay the expenses of the exploitation of the idea. Many well-to-do women ministered unto Jesus of their substance. Mahomet took a short cut, he married a rich widow.

The next step was to impregnate himself with an odor of sanctity — a very easy matter, if you know how. There are many ways. Mahomet chose the easiest, retired to a cave for meditation and the undergoing of ascetic hardships. It is claimed that he had revolved





the scheme of a new god over in his mind for fifteen years. This is nothing. From the age of twelve to thirty, eighteen years, the "man of sorrows" brooded over his idea.

Naturally the people of Arabia didn't take to the new religion. They were in many senses a learned people, good astronomers, good alchemists, good mathematicians. But Mahomet was a fighter, and he forced it down their throats at the point of the sword. After his victory, his solemn pilgrimage to Mecca was a masterstroke. Allah was seated on his shadowy throne, and to-day counts his followers by the millions. In forming his theocorp, too, Mahomet displayed the highest order of theotectic talent. In a land where it only rains every year or so, with vast stretches of parched sandy deserts, what more delightful than a promise that in the next world there should be fountains and green trees galore? and further, in a land much given to concupiscence and lechery, what more entrancing outlook than a heaven peopled with a race of women celestially beautiful, ever young, wholesome, tender and loving, with eyes soft, lustrous and deeply dark, awaiting the arrival of the faithful?

One is most forcibly reminded of the reply of King Agrippa to the ex-Pharisee pleading before him. After telling him that his ravings were those of a mad man, the king, with a keen irony, cried out: *Almost* (ital. mine) thou persuadest me to be a Christian!

But after all, it remained for an American, one Joseph Smith, to set up one of the most original theocorps ever known to the civilized world, and it has had





a really astonishing success when one takes into consideration that this vintage of Superstition was brewed, distilled, bottled and sold at enormous prices to very intelligent people right here within the very limits of our Republic. Without any exaggeration it has made "the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad for them and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose."

Smith's heirs and assigns have literally "blue pencilled" Jehovah, and under the guidance and control of a board of managers, consisting of old father Adam, Jesus, Mahomet, Smith, Brigham Young and other "saints," with Adam as president, have set up a Celestian Manufacturing Company for the manufacture of souls, if possible at a rate commensurate with the production on earth of bodies to receive them. These are no *homunculi* according to the recipe of Celsus, but the real thing, such, no doubt, as were in the olden time manufactured in the heavenly workshops of Jahveh himself. Later Jesus is to share his power with these "saints," and there is to be a temporal kingdom established somewhere here on earth. The very latest excursion of the human imagination into the bright fields of Theotectics has resulted in the establishment of a very flourishing system of hagiopathy, commonly known as Christian Science, which is compacted one halfpenny worth of Science and an intolerable deal of Superstition.

For centuries upon centuries there has been a system of healing based upon the really scientific fact that many of the ills which flesh is heir to have no real existence, but are the result of morbid nervous conditions, and are readily, nay, at times, almost miraculously,





cured by "shock," "suggestion" or prayer accompanied by implicit faith in the so-called healer.

Naturally the founder or founders of this faith had no use for the Old Testament, for the Jews, under the rule of Jahveh, were very fond of a good purge or a dose of bitter herbs. So far as Jahveh was concerned, these scientists simply reduced him to a mere abstraction. The most filmy and cobwebby summer cloud, wrung out and hung up to dry in the sun, would be more existent than the god of these new Christians, and yet with the courage of ignorance they say that god is love.

Now, love being a phase of consciousness (the only absolutely real thing, all else being mere postulate), or, better said, a state of sympathetic attraction between two consciousnesses, to apply to it the term "god," which can never be more than a mystic paraph, is wilfully to substitute a theory for a condition — the infallible symptom of the presence of *bacillus sacerdotalis*.

Love we know and we can almost say *amo, ergo sum*. It is profitable to us even from a selfish standpoint; but god — outside of the lord's prayer so called, has never been known to give a crust to a beggar or a spoonful of milk to a kitten, not that many, very many spoonfuls of milk have not been given to kittens in god's name.

Poor, simple-minded, unsuspecting goodman of the house of humanity, he never suspects the trick that is everlastingly being played upon him by the sacerdote.

In the name of the prophet. Figs! But it is hardly fair for these "scientists" to attribute their miraculous





cures to the school of healing as practised by Jesus and his immediate followers and set forth in the so-called "New Testament," when thousands of years before that day healing by suggestion was practised by the divine physician Æsculapius in the sanctum of his temple at Epidaurus. He actually cured the plague at Rome by "absent treatment," merely directing the embassy that entreated him to "take the case" to carry back with them a serpent, that being quite sufficient, just as Mrs. Eddy or one of her priestesses might dismiss a suffering suppliant with a copy of "Science and Health," with directions to "read it."

It is not at all to be supposed that Jesus gave himself up with any particular satisfaction to the practice of healing sick people; but it is one of the few ways in which a god can give, to the minds of the common people, who are always the first to interest themselves in a brand-new divinity, assurance of his godhead. Nilly-willy he must play the physician, and that, too, without hire, for the common people are always frugal in paying for mere advice. But these cures soon become a valuable asset in the possession of any god or half-god who is determined to leave a record behind him, and Jesus made the most of it. When the doubters from the opposition camp began to quiz him, he simply said to them: You go and tell John what you have seen and heard, how the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the dead are raised. O poor, wretched children of humanity, is this the best the gods can do for you? Hundreds of years before this the older gods had given you a much nobler and more posi-





tive assurance of their divinity, Apollo with his music, Ceres with her agriculture, Bacchus with his wine, Minerva with her wisdom, Juno with conjugal felicity, Mercury with his commerce, Venus with her love, and the Muses with their arts.

Are ye, children of humanity, to be forever tricked, first by one god and then by another, with their hordes of sacerdotes living upon you, ready with a blessing if you will pay for it, or with a curse if you turn away from their altars in contempt? I cannot think it! The day must be near at hand when you shall rise in your wrath and drive out Superstition from your temples as you have driven out tyranny and despotism and human slavery from your fair land, whose blue arch spangled with the stars of Liberty was never intended by your fathers to cover any other than a free and enlightened people, in whose minds and hearts degrading ignorance or baleful Superstition should never find a lodgment.

\* \* \* \* \*

In all god-systems, from the very earliest stages of their evolution, there is a strongly marked tendency to construct a theocorp, so as to make the system practicable, for surely it would be a most undignified proceeding for a god to run about executing his own orders, doing his own errands, lighting up the sun, unloosing the winds, forging his own thunderbolts or conducting souls to their last abiding-place. In the Egyptian and Babylonian theocorps, winged creatures, at times of the most fantastic forms, are met with, and the Jews, who always took good care to profit by their



enslavement among superior peoples, brought away their first notions of winged creatures from the Babylonian captivity. These greatly enriched their celestial furnishings, and Jahveh proceeded to make good use of them, and there is no better proof that Moses did not write Genesis than upon driving Adam and Eve out of Eden. Jahveh, long before he acquired them is made to place "cherubim" at the east of the garden and arrange a flaming sword, apparently a revolving one. All this is seemingly an exaggerated precaution to take against poor Adam; but it must be borne in mind that he was between thirty-five and forty feet in height.

But the "seraphim," another form of winged creature, were hexapterous. With one pair he — for there were never any creatures of the female sex allowed in the Jewish theocorp — covered his face, with the second pair he covered his feet and with the third he performed aviation.

Later the Jewish theocorp was enriched with a simpler form of winged beings denominated in the Septuagint *aggeloi*, messengers. Father Jove had had his messengers (*Dios aggeloi*), and the Greek translators appropriated the term, just as they took hundreds of others which afterwards became famous, e. g., ecclesiastic, baptize, Christ, episcopal, dogma, eucharist, presbyter, etc. Unlike many of the winged creatures of the Olympian theocorp, such as the rosy boy-god Eros with his baby wings, the exquisite Psyche with her filmy fans, the dainty Iris with her rainbow-tinted pinions, and the "lackey of the gods," with petasus and talaria, poised on a "heaven-kissing hill," the *aggeloi* of the





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Jewish mythology were male beings of great strength and stature, as evidenced in the catch-as-catch-can between Jacob and an angel, who, after a long struggle, threw Jacob's thigh out of joint. John the seer witnessed thousands and thousands of angels round about the throne and heard their voices. There were angels of destruction, ready at a sign from Jahveh to wipe a city or a people from the face of the earth. Like Father Jove's lesser gods these angels had luminous faces, and often appeared to mortals, and in visions were seen descending from, and ascending to, heaven. But now that the children of Superstition are obliged to find a higher location than the banks of mist a mile or so above the earth's surface, it would naturally be ridiculous to expect angels to come as often as formerly, their visits being now "short and far between," and likely to cease altogether as education and enlightenment destroy the poisonous miasmata that have drifted over our land from the Mediterranean stew-pan of ignorance and Superstition.

As has been the case in all celestial regions so called, inhabited by whole gods, half gods, angels winged and unwinged, and monsters compacted of half human, half beast, or whole beasts such as John the seer describes, having seven heads and ten horns, with a tail strong enough to knock one-third of the stars out of their settings and tumble them down to earth, rebellions break out. John, who appears to be well posted, says that there was "war in heaven," a chief of angels named Michael leading his angelic cohorts against Satan and his angels, Satan being worsted and cast out into the earth.



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And a writer named Jude tells of a conflict between Jahveh and certain angels and how he loaded them with everlasting chains, and how this same archangel Michael had a dispute with Satan in relation to the "body of Moses."

Prometheus, in his contest with Father Jove, tells how a feud was stirred up among the divinities. How Father Jove was in his wrath bent upon destroying the whole race of mortals. As the great Greek dramatist puts it: Every one that has new-acquired power is stern.

When the Christians sought to destroy the gods of Greece by taking over the Jewish mythology *en bloc*, they proceeded to make some very considerable changes in the component parts of the theocorp. The cherubim and seraphim did not appeal to them. A being with three pairs of wings was not very lovely to look upon. It had too much the appearance of a gigantic insect.

The first radical change in the theocorp was to do something that very naturally would prove to be positively abhorrent to the Jewish monotheistic idea, to wit, not only admitting the son and a mysterious being visible only to human eyes in the shape of a white dove into the theocorp, but introducing a woman (the mother) as Queen of Heaven, and filling the sacred precincts with swarms of female angels. Of course, as intimated by Jesus, there was not as in Olympian mythology any cohabitation between the male and female angels. No one seems to know how they increased or where the great numbers of baby angels came from, who constitute in the skilful manipulation of the sacer-

dotes, evangelists and preachers of all denominations





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one of the great and irresistible means to an end in turning the minds of the young out into the poisonous pastures of Superstition. O shame! O burning shame! Will it, can it, must it go on forever?

\* \* \* \* \*

The growth of the human soul was slow. The first gods that man set up were only satisfied when their altars were wet with human blood, the warmer the more efficacious. To please the god of the Aztecs the victim was laid close to the altar so that his heart could be placed, still palpitating, thereupon. Siva, the third person of the Hindu trinity, exacted human sacrifices by crushing under wheels of juggernaut. Both Father Jove and Jahveh were not averse to human sacrifices. Both mythologies show that Jews and Greeks had well-defined notions of its efficacy. At the last moment Diana relented and saved the life of Iphigenia when the knife was at her fair throat. Jahveh, too, relented as Abraham had already piled the wood of the burnt offering upon his son; but the glib manner in which he directed Abraham to take his only son, whom he loved, and offer him for a burnt offering, speaks for itself. But in the case of Jephthah, Jahveh stood firm, just as a god should do, and let his nostrils inhale the odor of this virgin's blood. In fact Jahveh seemed to take pleasure in these bloody deeds, for he raised no hand to stay the hewing to pieces of Agag before his very face, nor to save Uriah when he fell in the forefront of the hottest battle. The ancient Druid priests also delighted their gods with human sacrifices — a trick no doubt learned in the Orient. These "sacrifices" were



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the parents of prayer which they dipt in blood and which odor clings to it to this day, and no human being sends up a prayer in our time to these "shadowy gods on shadowy thrones," that he does not stir the foul, red mess of the olden time, and the thurifer wags his turibulum to smother the sickening odor. Later the roasting of the slain beast took the place of the human sacrifice, and the fattest tidbits were set aside for Father Jove and Jahveh, and the Grecian and Roman augurs poked their tongues into their cheeks as they pretended to inspect the entrails, while Jahveh's priests stood by to see whether he would deign to accept the offering by lazily kicking a bolt from his arsenal to signify his pleasure.

Now, now, there are no more left-over dainty bits for the priest; but the latter feels that his very existence lies in the degree of fervor that he can excite in the hearts of the prostrate worshippers. And so the old world wags on, the poor wretch of a Hindoo sweating at the wheel of his praying machine, the Mussulman prostrating himself at the call of the muezzin, the mumbling and anxious Romanist shifting the wooden balls of his rosary with trembling fingers, and the calm and placid Protestant half kneeling and with but partially covered face telling his god what a "miserable sinner" he is — which he doesn't believe himself, and begging him to save *his* soul whatever he may do with the *others*. Prayer is the offspring of sacrifice to the gods, and human selfishness is its mother, and in its turn it begat Superstition with ignorance for the mother.

Let man but think for a moment what vile and des-





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picable uses he would put his god to, were he able to sway him by prayer — *particeps* in murder and assassination; ally in iniquitous war, oppression and pillage; cover in unthinkably villainous deceit, treachery and chicanery; colleague and zealous stand-by in the slaughter and fury of every so-called holy war. For us to apply for assistance to a power, which is so obviously of our own creation and which we have under the subtle guidance and minatory prompting of the sacerdotes dubbed "superhuman," and at the command of these latter-day silversmiths must stand ready at a sign at any moment to shout: Great is Diana of the Ephesians! is so illogical, so ridiculous, so plainly a part of a mere scheme to preserve intact certain fees, perquisites and emoluments, that one wonders how self-respecting and rational human beings can still be held down to these appeals to a deity.

Of course, we may expect anything from the human mind when it has been for centuries soaked, steeped, sodden in the stewpan of Superstition and debauched by promises of a certain and sure entry after death into a *pays de Cocagne*.

But in the name of enlightened humanity — as free from the oppressor's gyves as we are from the binding effect of hoary precedent — let us spread it upon the record that we do not belong to such a class of human beings.

We have gone far enough as it is. What has been the result of these "prayers," these appeals to this "super-human power" for help? What could it be but a steady trickle of hypocrisy, soaking into the very tissue of our



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issues politic, social and ethical? We are torn by one horn or the other of the dilemma — when these omnipotent beings do not help us after our prostrations and supplications, we are forced to do one thing or the other, despise them, flout them and chastise them, as does the African savage, logical in his undeveloped intelligence, or apologize for them. To the debauchment of our own intellects, to the glaring befoulment of our own human dignity, to the merciless blotting out of our own self-respect, we do apologize for them. Were this god a man and he so failed us, we would hold our knuckles 'neath his nose and cry him "lying fraud" and "cheat" and "impostor."

But what must we do now at the bidding of the sacerdoté in order to save the credit of this "omnipotent being" who has so tricked us, led us on and then abandoned us to the contumely of a world, only too ready to gloat over the misfortunes of a fellow creature? Either we must take the entire blame upon ourselves — no matter how sacred our cause to us — or cry out that he is punishing us for our sins or the sins of our fathers, and we did not deserve his help!

Or, we must save his credit by bowing our heads at the sign of the sacerdoté and murmur humbly and contritely: His ways are past finding out; the wisdom of this world is foolishness with god; though he slay me yet will I trust him; whom he loveth, he chasteneth; the battle is not to the strong; it is not in man to direct his steps; all nations before him are as nothing; thou renderest unto every man according to his work.

There could not be a better illustration of the utter





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futility of that "effeminate uplifting of hands," as the Greek dramatist terms it, than in our Civil War. The sentimental side was the South's, they were fighting for their liberty, and we had ten to their one. If ever that touching expression of Virgil's, *lachrimæ rerum*, found most fitting application it was here. The fair women of the Southland deluged Jahveh's altars with their bitterest tears, and their deep-drawn sighs gathered like a mist upon the stained-glass windows of his temples, shutting out the sunshine and rolling down in drops of supplication, gracious enough to move a Moloch. They might as well have addressed them to the mud idol of an African savage. Poor sweet souls, they didn't know and probably don't know now that gods follow and never lead; and that they can't help liberty when the tyrant has the cannon of the longest range.

O my countrymen, why not be honest? If ye could but once free your souls from the grievous burden of these Superstitions, ye would stand up refreshed and strengthened like men who have shed the blight of some bad disorder and again walk forth in the health and sweetness of purged bodies and clear skins.

Would not it be a thousand times better to address your prayers to those who can hear them and be moved by them, to those we love, to those whom we honor and respect, to those who can lift us up and strengthen us with their thoughts and influences, to those who can turn us away from the hurtful and towards the healthy, to those who will prompt us to good actions and lead us to live for some one else than self?

The "Lord's Prayer," so called, is obviously arti-



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ficial and manifestly put together by an illogical and unthinking mind, bent upon glorifying a god and not, as it should be, upon the betterment of mankind. Man should eat the bread of toil. It should not be god-given. To attach a condition to human forgiveness places it on a lower scale than the dog's, who puts all his thoughts on the future and has none for the past.

"Lead us not into temptation" might be addressed to a demon that haunts our pillow or our path, but not to a so-called omnipotent god. And the prayer should have ended: "And of thy power and of thy kingdom, make us the glory."

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The more ignorant and degraded the human mind is, the more it cries after the miraculous, and from the setting up of the first rude altar, unhewn and shapeless, the gods have been unceasingly occupied, under the direction of the sacerdotes, either in comforting or destroying their worshippers, destroying them by fire, flood, pestilence, famine and the play of thunderbolts; or comforting them by an almost perpetual show of petty miracles in the daily walks of life. Man paid for them, and the sacerdotes were forced to keep up the supply. All religions being "made on earth," you may imagine how silly and ridiculous most of these miracles were, especially in the Jewish mythology. In fact, in wonder-working, Jahveh was rarely so grand and picturesque as Father Jove, that is, with very few exceptions, the one being Joshua's ordering the sun to stand still while he continued the slaughter of the enemy; but this miracle has no beauty in the eyes of an intelligent





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man, I had almost said "or child," who knows that were the earth to be arrested in its revolution for the thousand-millionth part of a second, it would tumble into the sun.

Dividing the waters of the Red Sea and making a dry path for the Jews to cross over to the opposite shore would have been rather a taking miracle had it not been followed by one of the vilest and shabbiest tricks, viz.: allowing the Egyptians to get half-way across and then turning the waters back upon them. A god should always bear in mind that he is expected to be above human weakness and human passions.

In this respect Jahveh falls far below Father Jove. As he says himself he is a "jealous god," and he might have added, cruel, revengeful and bloody-minded; in fact, a tribal god in every sense of the word, ever ready to play some trick or stratagem upon the enemies of the twelve tribes under his special guidance, and quite satisfied to hang in the form of a cloud over the tent containing such mystic paraphernalia as nomadic tribes could conjure up. Let us fondly hope that the day is not far distant when some master mind will, by the lightning of his intellect, dissolve all "clouds" of Superstition that hang over our civilization just as the Roman general entered the so-called "holy of holies" and lifted the veil to show the world that there was nothing behind it. Jahveh had not even one last thunderbolt left to hurl at him, although he had, once upon a time, for a mere touch of the ark by a profane hand, stricken the man dead.

And such some day must be the fate of all "holies



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of holies," set up by the sacerdote to hold the human mind in servitude. The Jewish mythology often surpasses the Grecian and Roman in excesses of cruelty that might well stagger our red Indians. Such as the she bears destroying forty-two children for a bit of mere mischief; sending down fire upon his people for a trivial complaint; slaughtering fifty thousand threescore and ten people for looking into the ark; sending one of his terrible angels in the night to slay a hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians, so that when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

The three men delivered from the fiery furnace, Daniel saved in the den of lions, Jonah kept safely three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, and Balaam's ass conversing in excellent Hebrew with his master, these are but a few of the many Munchausen tales that made the Jewish mythology the butt of ridicule in the days of Grecian and Roman supremacy in literature, art and refinement. And think, too, that a low-statured, misshapen, unlettered Jew, in the very shadow of the immortal masterpieces of Greek art, himself fresh from a fabricated interview with the spirit of the crucified Jesus, himself ready at a moment's notice to invent tales of miraculous experiences, should have had the audacity to charge these great founders of the world's present architecture, sculpture, philosophy and literary models in every genre with being "superstitious"!

Superstition? Their superstition was a sweet and lovely wisdom compared with the semi-barbarous attempts of a nomadic people to set the aureola of kingly majesty about the head of their tribal god.

