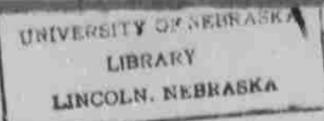


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THE RAILROAD HOLOCAUST.

BY W. L. CARLTON.

Over the top of the beaten track,
Into the darkness deep and black,
Heavy and fast,
As a mountain blast,
With scream of whistle, and clang of gong,
The great train rattled and thundered along
Travelers, cushioned and sheltered sit,
Passing the time with doze and chat;
Thinking of naught
With danger fraught;
Whiling the hours with whim and song,
As the great train rattled and thundered along.

Covered an' with the sleepers lay,
Lost to the dangers of the way;
Wandering back,
Adown life's track,
A thousand dreamy scenes among;
And the great train rattled and thundered along.
Heavily o'erwhelmed the man of care:
Lightly slept the maiden fair;
And the mother pressed
Unto her breast.

Her beautiful babies with yearning strong
And the great train rattled and thundered along.

Shading his eyes with his brawny hand,
Danger ahead the driver scanned;
And he turned the steam,
For the red light's gleam
Flashed warning to him there was something
Wrong.

But the great train rattled and thundered along,
"Down the brakes!" rang the driver's shout
"Down the brakes!" sang the whistle out;
But the speed was high,
And the danger nigh,
And death was waiting to build his pyre,
And the train dashed into a river of fire.

Into the night the red flames glared;
High they leaped, and crackled, and streamed;
And the great train loomed,
Like a monster doomed,
In the midst of the flames and their ruthless
Foe.

In the murderous tide of a river of fire
Roued the sleeper within his bed;
A crash, a plunge, and a gleam of red,
And the sweltering heat
Of his winding sheet
Clung round his form with an agony dire;
And he moaned and died in a river of fire.

And they who were spared from the fearful
Death,
And groaned that, too late,
From a terrible fate

To rescue their comrades was their desire,
Ere they sunk in a river of death and fire.

Pity for them who, helpless, died,
And sunk in the river's merciless tide,
And blessings unfold
The driver told.

Who, daring for honor, and not for hire,
Went down with his train in the river of fire.

Evolution, the Law of Progress.

All persons, perhaps, will assent to the statement that civilization, together with all which the term includes, has advanced, and still advances. But all do not agree as to the law by which such advancement has been made; nay, all do not even admit that any law is known, or can be known to account for it. Many seem to think that the advancement already

made, has been the work of chance, or controlled by some power which man cannot understand, or, at least, can have no part in directing.

But, if such be the case, then civilization is dependent upon some principle of which man can know nothing, and hence he can never be sure that its progress will continue. Yet, such an idea seems to leave the human race in a state of incompleteness, in a condition where darkness rather than light is their inheritance. But no! law there is to everything else, law there must be to the development which we find going on around us. The discovery of the nature of this law, is a question of the utmost importance, and a single hint as to its nature (for that is all our time allows) may well repay our attention.

When it is said that the principle of progress is the principle of evolution, many will immediately raise their hands in holy horror, and imagine that such a view must lead to the destruction of all their most cherished doctrines. But such, I think, is not the fact; yet, even if the admission that the doctrine of evolution is the true law of progress, overthrows some or even many, of our present ideas—if this principle can be proved to be true—shall we reject it on account of our prejudices? Shall we stay the wheel of progress by refusing to accept the true law, and thus to profit by its aid? Shall we repeat the mistake of former ages and refuse to receive a knowledge of the very principle by which we are compelled to progress, if we move forward at all? Such a policy is suicidal. Let us then examine some of the proofs for this theory. In the development of law from the single conception of obedience to paternal power among the savage tribes, to the most elaborate system of our day, the law of progress is the law of evolution. In Archaic man, we find a single principle, a germ, if we may so express it, from which slowly and gradually, one conception after another is evolved. A single term may bind up in itself the elements which finally, through this gradual differentiation, develop into many different and complex notions. The conception of the modern contract is scarcely found among primitive men. Their law does not recognize it. The transfer of property is as far as this development has yet gone. But in this transfer is found the germ from which the contract may come. All that is needed is a slight change in the surroundings, in

the condition of men, and the evolution of the two ideas, the conveyance and the contract is complete. Thus in every department of law, the development from the primitive idea may be traced through its successive stages. Everywhere, we find the simple developing into the complex, the germ throwing out branches and expanding into the complicated forms of modern civilization.

The same line of argument may be followed in studying the development of government. The earliest form of which history gives any authentic account is the rule of the father over the family. Can one imagine any form of government more rudimentary? All the departments which are found in a modern government are here united in a single individual. In fact, one man literally legislates, executes, and decides upon the constitutionality of his own laws. Now, this progress may be traced through all its stages and everywhere we find the same law developed.

The change from the single conception of early times has been slow, and only by comparing periods of time widely separated, can the change in ideas be discovered.

The division of the powers of government into the executive, the legislative and the judicial has only been fully accomplished within a brief period of time, and among a few of the most advanced nations. And with each century this evolution is progressing further and further, the individual is coming more and more to the front, and the perfection of each branch of government to serve some particular end is growing with the progress of the ages.

In morals, also, the same method of development may be observed. In the early history of the now civilized nation, or among the rude tribes of the present, we find their code of morals is of the simplest kind. But few acts are considered as wrong, and these are generally of the most heinous character. On the other hand, to be brave, to suffer pain without a murmur, and faithfully to keep a promise, would, perhaps, be about the only acts which they held as especially honorable. Their moral sense did not extend beyond these simple ideas. The complex and delicate system of moral thought among the most refined of to-day had no place in their minds, it is only by the slowest processes, by the slightest changes in the surroundings of the people, and thus in their