

# The Battle in the City

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**M**UNICIPAL problems are only one phase of the great problem of human life. That life is a struggle has long been taught by religion, and has recently been reaffirmed by science. From the cradle to the grave we are engaged in it. A struggle in the individual between the higher and the lower, the animal and the spiritual, the sensuous and the super-sensuous. "The good that I would I do not, the evil I hate to do," is a very ancient interpretation of this struggle with which most of us are familiar. There are few sinners so apparently hopelessly depraved that they never enter on this battle. There are few saints that have won the battle and have no need for further fight. The city, the modern city, is the place where the forces of good and evil are more than everywhere else lined up for conflict. The city is the heart of this great campaign. The city is the Gettysburg of the long war. The city is the Quarte Bras in the Waterloo of the ages. To a great city come both the worst forces and the best forces of the nation. Here gather the criminals, the Ishmaelites, the men whose hand is against every man. Here they come to rob and to plunder, here when they have robbed and plundered elsewhere they come to live. This is their camping ground. This is where they easiest find the booty and the most. Here gather the sensual forces. Here come the men who want ease and indulgence. Here come the men who like to dress in fine linen and fare sumptuously every day. Here are the great hotels, the restaurants, the theaters; here the great pleasure givers of every kind, and here therefore come the men who are seeking pleasure. Here men come to gamble, and to drink, and to make merry. Here come the men who have care for nothing while life laughs its hours away. Here, too, come men who are eager for wealth, who measure all of life by the dollar mark, who think success is measured by the money a man possesses, not by the character he develops. Here come the men and the women who are fond of display. This is the place to show ourselves off. This is the place to ride in the finest carriages with footmen and coachman. This is the place to wear the fine dresses, the glittering fêves. This is the place in which to go to the opera—not always to hear the music, but sometimes to have other people look at us. Here is where we go to the horse show, and people wonder whether we have gone to see the horses or for the horses to see us. Here come the wolves that raven, the swine that fatten, the bees that hive, the peacocks that strut. But here also come the great forces for intelligence and for virtue. Here the noblest elements of humanity are found; here the strength, the heroism and the intelligence compacted together. Here are the great commercial enterprises; not merely money-making but humanity serving. A great railroad is something more than a corporation to pay dividends to stockholders. It is a civilizer. Run this railroad across the western prairie and where this road goes the village springs up, the school house and the church are built; and sending their children to these school houses and worshipping in these churches are men and women from across the sea, men and women who had no hope at home, who

existed in a dull despair that men miscalled content. Now they have life, hope, activity, spurred on to life by the opportunity in this new land. If I were a railroad man with \$50,000,000 to invest I should not know how much to put into a railroad and how much into a college. I am not sure that a railroad would not render the best service of the two—much better than some colleges. Here are the great newspapers. I do not think I quite agree with Jefferson when he said that he would rather have a country without government than without newspapers. But I am quite certain that we could get along without congress for a year better than we could get along without newspapers for a year. Wonderful enterprises they are, reaching their hands out into all the world and gathering all the news from all the world, and serving it to us with our breakfast coffee. They are great educators. They teach us what we are, how much our civilization is, how much of solid mahogany and how much very thin veneer. Here are the great schools. To the towns and cities come the parents, bringing their children to be educated, because in the towns and cities are the great universities, the great industrial and professional schools. Here the public school is seen at its best. Here too are the great churches, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish. I do not say there are not preachers as able, as devout, in many a country village as in the metropolitan pulpits. We are too prone to measure a man by the place he stands in rather than by the work he is doing. Yet in the main the great preachers and pastors are to be found largely in the great cities. Here are the auxiliary institutions, the Young Men's Christian associations, the Daughters of the King, the various missionary boards. They center here, have their direction here, are moulded and shaped here; but their influence does not end here, and from these cities, these homes, from these churches goes out a stream of beneficence to bless our own land and to bless other lands. I had occasion ten years ago to make inquiry as to what the churches in the city of Brooklyn were doing. I found that in that one year they had spent \$2,250,000 on religious work, and \$1,333,000 on charitable work outside the churches. And Brooklyn is not an exceptionally rich city, nor has it done nearly as much as New York. Thus we have these two forces standing face to face in the city, wrestling with each other, the forces of sensuality and vice and crime and ignorance, and the forces of virtue and intelligence and courage and moral purpose. Here they meet at close quarters. We jostle one another on the same car, we walk by one another on the same street, we live beside one another on the same block, I am not sure that we do not sometimes kneel by the side of one another in the same church. The question of political reform, therefore, is not a political question. It is the battle of the ages in a microcosm. It is not a problem that can be solved by a political panacea or settled in half an hour. It cannot be settled by electing one party or another to office. "Turn the democratic rascals out," and leave the city as it is, and the republican rascals will come in. "Turn the republican rascals out," and leave the city as it is, and the democratic rascals will

come in. I think New York City has been perhaps the worst governed city in the country under Tammany rule, unless republican Philadelphia has not been a little worse governed. Political reforms, if they are simply political, do not go to the root of the matter. The problem is more than a political question. It cannot be solved by legislation. It involves the battle of all the ages, that began in Eden, and will not end until the great curtain of all human history drops down and the other life begins, that goes on we do not know where or how.

In this great battle of the ages the enemies of honest government in our great cities seem to me to be chiefly three: Ignorance, indifference and greed. For ignorance the remedy is education. What in some sense every political campaign furnishes indirectly, teaching us our obligations, teaching us the principles by which we should be governed.

Indifference is a worse enemy than ignorance. The chief sinners are not those who live in the tenement houses on the East Side, but those who live in the brownstone houses in the center and heart of the city. Every voter is a trustee. In a hotly contested presidential election, out of 70,000,000 people about 14,000,000 vote. What does that mean? It means that every voter votes for five others, for the women, the children, the nonvoting population. I am their trustee. If I neglect to vote I neglect my duty as a trustee. If I throw away my vote, I throw away the rights of these five people who are entrusted to me. If I sell my vote for a place or an advantage or a \$5 bill, I sell the rights that have been entrusted to me. And yet I think the chiefest cause, one certainly of the chiefest causes of this corruption, has been what I call the indifference of our better class of citizens. It is an old difficulty, very old, as old as the Book of Judges.

The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them, and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit and go to wave to and fro over the trees? And the trees said unto the vine, Come thou and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to wave to and fro over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, and if not, let fire come out of the bramble and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

The olive and the fig and the vine have said in America, "We do not care for politics." Then we have elected the bramble, and when we have elected it the parable has been reversed, for fire has come out of the bramble and devoured the cedars of Lebanon. Nor can I fail to say here one word of honor to the man who surely belonged among the vines and the figs and the olives, who had a position in this city which any man might covet, a place of distinguished honor and also congenial work, out of the quiet, pleasant, constructive

labor of a great university, went forth to take up your work and my work, and to do good service for you and for me—not to be praised for what he did, but to be scolded, not to say slandered, for what he was not able to do in so short a time.

The great enemy we have to fight is greed, the spirit that desires to get something for nothing, that puts acquisition above everything else; the spirit which counts honesty as something between man and man, but nothing between man and men; the spirit which considers it wrong to pick the pocket of a man, but right to put the arm up to the shoulder in the public treasury. And this spirit of greed is worse when it is seen in the highest quarters. It is not at its worst in the man who sells his vote for a dollar bill or a job in the street cleaning department. It is worse in the men who swear off the taxes they ought to pay; worse in the men that bribe legislators to give public franchises for which they ought to be willing to pay the public a fair compensation; worse in the men that corrupt in order that they may gain by the corruption; worse in the most respectable sinners, not in those that are most disgraced and dishonored; worse in the most intelligent, not in the most ignorant. It is a sin, a black, shameful, damnable sin, wherever it appears; in any man, whatever his learning, his rank, his wealth, his position, who counts the public necessity as something out of which he may take for personal profit an advantage, without giving to the public a fair, reasonable, just equivalent.

What are we going to do? It is clear that this is a battle not to be won merely by voting, nor even chiefly by voting. It is to be won by lessons taught and learned in the home. It is to be won by mothers teaching their children patriotism and purity and truth and honor. It is taught by the influences that are more potent than political power. It is to be won by ideals which we hold ourselves and foster and inspire in others. It is to be won by the work of the minister. Not by his preaching on trusts and strikes when they are being discussed by the newspapers; not by doing the work that belongs to the press; not that. But by recognizing the fact that religion is to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God; by recognizing the fact that our prayer is not an idle one, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." By so preaching and so ministering as to fit men and women to live noble lives in New York City. If the ministers can do this, we can leave problems concerning the celestial city for a little while. We shall be ready for it when the time comes. We will be building a celestial city on earth.

For the battle is not to be won by politics, which is a mere method of life, but by life itself. It is to be won by the recognition by us of the truth that we are in this world not for pleasure, not for wealth, not for any subsidiary thing; that we are here as our Master was here, to love and to serve; that we are here to fight the battle so long as God shall give us life; that we are here so to live that when at last the end shall come we can look back upon our city life and say, not, I was a millionaire, not, I had a good time, not, I was in society, but, I fought a good fight and I kept the faith.

New York City.

## Humanity's Final and Grimmiest Battle

**I**N OUR generation we behold a gigantic spectacle. Only a few on this dark and restless earth grasp it in its full greatness. And in truth, one should be on another planet in order to see it as it is, monstrous, yet sublime in its very terror.

Let us imagine a perspective.

Instead of humanity we see a single vast man. And this man, a Hercules, is wrestling with a hydra.

The hydra of the old tales was an animal, patterned after the octopus, the polyp or the cuttlefish—an animal that has been placed in the first rank of the mollusks by modern science—therefore an animal of relatively high development.

But this man that we see battles with a thing that is not animal, not plant. It is merely alive. It is without organs, without inner structure. It is not gigantic, like the stered hydra, in the sense of having a single huge animal body. But it is gigantic in another sense that goes far beyond that old hydra.

In the hydra a new head grew at once in place of every one that was cut off. The monster to which I refer tears apart under the hands of the fighting man into millions of new horrors. Where one threatened now, countless masses threaten in the next moment.

And in this expanding mass the creatures spread over the earth and heaven till a new, still more dreadful whole is formed again of them, and drives like a black, killing fog, from all sides upon the Hercules. He strains, gasps—will he conquer? No mythology has created anything like that.

It is man—humanity fighting the bacillus. A most wonderful thing has, indeed, developed on our old planet. The highest and

the lowest form of organic life have met at last in a fight for existence.

The fight against the bacillus is a naked, defensive battle of the zoological species man. It is the last decisive war between the culminating point of all life-development and the oldest, most primitive, most simple existence that life has produced, with which life began millions of years ago, and which life has dragged upward with it as an undigested primordial remnant, side by side with the mighty development at whose pinnacle stands man.

The full earth-mastery of man strictly speaking, did not begin before the nineteenth century.

Man appeared on earth in an epoch in which it already was possible to reckon backward millions of years during which the vertebrates had become the superior creatures of the world.

The vertebrates, man's nearest ancestors and relatives, man had to destroy first. They faced him in three groups and in each group was a history of time.

The smallest and least important group remained as the vanishing rest of an epoch in whose highest period man did not exist. We call this the secondary epoch now. It was the day of the ichthyosaurs. This strange world had lasted through interminable spaces of time. Then it broke down. Probably the slowly strengthening worlds of mammals helped to force it under. It happened long before the coming of man. He did not meet the ichthyosaurs. Only here and there did he find a relic of the epoch.

Australia has preserved the most singular survivors. The few wild men there hardly disturbed them; our advancing European culture is doing it radically. The duck bill is disappearing. Soon they will

have shot the last kangaroo—one of the earliest and oldest of mammal forms; the great lizard-fish Ceratodus, whose ancestors formed the link between fish and lizard in the Devonian period, vegetates still in only two tiny rivulets; the mysterious lizard hatteria in New Zealand, the one surviving arch-reptile, which linked the reptiles with the amphibians and perhaps even with the mammals, has become so rare, only 100 years after its discovery that only the protection of the government and its isolated habitat on a few rock islands in Cook sound check its extinction temporarily.

On this same New Zealand the Maoris ate up a race of immense wingless birds, the moas. For all this great world of survivors, man became the executioner in the beginning and remains so.

Of quite different importance to man in his infancy was a second group of large vertebrates. In North America, Europe and North Asia there came a change at this time that altered or destroyed the animals of tertiary time as the ichthyosaurs, marsupials and billed mammals of secondary time had been swept away.

However much man may have witnessed of this change, it certainly occurred without his help. When he had become strong, the entire, still monstrously large remnant of the tertiary world dwelled in south Asia and in Africa. A small distant remnant also lived in South America—grotesque mammoth sloths and mammoth armadillos. The latter evidently became extinct early, and as we have evidence that man ate megatherium and glyptodon in prehistoric days, it is likely that he was the hangman of this animal world also.

In other places the battle was not so easy. For 2,000 years and more the African and

Indian tertiary animal-world with its elephants, rhinoceri, hippopotami, huge carnivora and manlike monkeys, such as gorilla and orang, confronted even civilized humanity like a demonic specter, surrounded with fables, the image of the "wild world" that ruled lands and threatened humanity.

But as early as Carthage man learned to subdue the beast. The Carthagian enslaved the elephant and made war material of him. The iron Roman dragged the jungle brutes into his arenas in armies. And when the musket was invented the final hour struck for this bit of primeval and ancestral life. The tertiary world of giants went tumbling headlong after the secondary world and "culture" became the executioner of a historical decree.

But man had to do with another group of animals. The great force that drove the tertiary mammals out of the north continents, before man became strong, was the ice. A certain percentage of mammals not thus driven south consisted of some that had adjusted themselves to the cold. So there came the red-wooled mammoth, the furred rhinoceros, the cave lion, the musk ox and the reindeer.

This is the so-called diluvial animal world. And man had to do directly with it—man, whose plainest remnants show that he lived on the edges of the glaciers of the ice period, and who perhaps had to thank the stress of the ice-time for his greatest early progress, such as the discovery of the way to kindle fire.

Where is this diluvial world today? Man has eaten it.

This example of the vertebrates practically exhausts almost the whole problem

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