# VARIOUS

## CONTINENTAL MONTHLY , VOL. 5, NO. 6, JUNE, 1864

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Continental Monthly , Vol. 5, No. 6, June, 1864 / Various — «Public Domain»,

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# Various
# Continental Monthly , Vol. 5, No. 6, June, 1864 / Devoted to Literature and National Policy

## ERNEST RENAN'S THEORY

Christianity is a fact. We sometimes hear of men who are said to 'deny' 'Christianity.' The expression is nonsense. Men cannot deny the sun. Christianity has been a visible thing, on this planet, for eighteen hundred years. It has done a heavy amount of work, which is very visible too. It is altogether too late in the day to '*deny* Christianity.'

That is the first thing to be understood. There is no arguing against the fact. You must take the fact and make the best of it. If your theory requires the annihilation of the fact, it's a bad thing for your theory, for the fact insists on staying. What an amount of fearfully laborious stupidity we would have been saved, if only that plain principle had been remembered!

Christianity has stood face to face with the world, for ages, a hard, stern, uncompromising reality. With a pair of tremendous arms it has worked, fought, endured, conquered, destroyed, builded, all over the earth. It has burned its brand into time. It has stamped its footprints in fire and brightness on earth and sea. It so stands, a great, wonderful, triumphant, flaming fact, blazing through the ages, flaming to the stars, melting, moulding, enlightening humanity.

The first thing to be remembered, then, by Christian and unbeliever alike, when they come to speak of Christianity, is that these things are not the matters in debate. They are the facts to be explained, to be accounted for. In all argument they themselves must first be taken for granted.

That is to say, here is this religion, certainly to any thoughtful man the most wonderful thing, take it all in all, that history has to tell about. It starts in an obscure corner of an obscure province. Its founder dies as a felon among felons. Its teachers are stupid peasants, fettered by a narrow dialect of an almost unknown tongue. Its whole origin is barbarous, ignorant, disgraceful by any worldly judgment. So it begins. As it spreads, imperial Rome takes alarm, and turns to crush the barbarous fanaticism, in the pride of her learning, civilization, and power. She plants her iron heel on the neck of the creeping sect. She presses it down with her gigantic weight. Time passes. The little sect that began in an obscure city of an obscure province, 'the number of the names together being an hundred and twenty,' in less than three centuries masters the world's crowned mistress, and plants its standard in triumph, to remain forever, on the Seven Eternal Hills. Resistless Rome is beaten to her knees, every national reverence, every national divinity trampled on, and spit upon, and the barbarous and disgraceful sect sets its ignominious mark, *the cross of the condemned slave*, on every monument of Roman reverence, on every trophy of Roman greatness.

There never was such an utter conquest. A pure idea, without a material hand or weapon, domineers over the greatest empire under the sun, in spite of the whole power of that empire armed to crush it.

And, after Rome fell, the huge carcase beaten to the dust, and torn to fragments by the wild creatures that hung upon her borders, this wondrous mystery, this barbarous, obscure faith alone remained, invincible among the powers of Rome. Roman civilization was crushed to the earth, as the Roman legions were. Roman law was trampled out of sight, as Roman art and literature were; but Christianity stood up and faced the Vandal and the Goth, the Frank and Saxon, as it had faced the Cæsars before, and dragged the conquerors of the empire suppliants at the feet of the church. It built a Christian Europe out of the savage hordes of Asia, and made an England, and a Germany, and at last an America out of wild Goth and Ungar, out of bloody Frank and savage Dane.

Now all this is simply *matter of fact*. My belief in Christianity does not add one jot to these facts. My disbelief does not take one tittle from them. So far as they are concerned, every man is a believer in Christianity. He believes it exists. He believes it has existed, has had such and such a history, has produced such and such results. 'Christian' and 'infidel' alike, to be reasonable, to have any ground for reasonable discussion, go thus far together.

*They may differ in their explanations of the facts.* That is the only ground of difference. There is the point of separation. It is perfectly logical too. *Prima facie*, we have no complaint to make that they do differ. And here lies the improvement in the modern type of 'unbeliever.' He does not take the line of his older brethren, and rudely assail Christianity as a mere imposture with Voltaire and Paine. That sort of work has had its day. He, on the other hand, freely admits its beneficent achievements. He has grown reasonable. He accepts Christianity, as the believer does, as a fruitful, beneficent, and conquering fact. He only holds that its existence and its achievements may be accounted for in a far more satisfactory way than we 'believers' have discovered.

Now all this is comprehensible, and it is really, now, the ground of difference between those who believe in Christianity as divine, and those who hold it to be merely human. It is a clear and simple issue. Christianity accounts for itself and its work on a certain plain, straightforward, and consistent theory. It holds that theory to be reasonable, complete, ample, for all the facts. A number of people join issue just here with Christianity. They admit its facts, but they deny its manner of explaining them. They claim to put forward other methods of explanation, which shall be more reasonable, more natural, and, at the same time, just as ample for the facts. We have had a number of these philosophers, with their theories, and they have had various fortunes. On the whole, the Christian world has gone on about as usual, accepting the old explanation, adopting the old theory, a hundred to one, and has dropped the new theories one after another, after more or less investigation, into profound oblivion.

Now we are free to admit the old theory has its difficulties. There are 'things in it hard to be understood.' There are mysteries and wonders which it does not attempt to explain. There are 'hard sayings' which it leaves hard. And the new theories always claim to have no difficulties. They blame the old one bitterly because it tolerates them. They themselves claim to be 'reasonable,' they 'explain' everything.

They therefore challenge the trial. If they fail to be 'reasonable,' or if they can only be reasonable at the expense of some of the facts—that is to say, if they find no place for some of the authentic facts, and so have to explain them away; or if, on the whole, they make too large drafts on our credulity, and demand too great a power of faith—we have the logical right to dismiss them out of our presence with scant courtesy, and are bound to hold by the old explanation still.

The last man who has come forward with his theory of Christanity is Monsieur Ernest Renan, a Frenchman, a member of the Institute, and a Semitic scholar of some considerable pretensions. He broaches his theory in a book, which he calls 'The Life of Jesus.' He offers it to the world, through that book, as an improvement on the accepted one. We propose here to look at M. Renan's theory, and see whether it has any advantages to offer over that usually taught in churches in America, and which the present writer learned, some *lustra* ago, while catechized at the chancel veil, and which his children are learning now.

It makes the examination easier that M. Renan freely and fully admits the achievements of Christianity. Indeed he glories over them. The beneficence of Christianity, its hallowing and elevating power in the history of the world, its wondrous blessedness among men, the glory it has cast over human life and human aims, the nobleness it has conferred on human character, all these he takes a pride in confessing and appreciating. He will not be a whit behind the stanchest believer in acknowledging the power of these, or in the capacity of prizing these.

But he cannot accept the explanation Christianity gives of itself. He proposes another of his own. We may take his theory as the fruit and flower of all 'liberal' thought. Here, at last, is what unbelieving learning and philosophy have to offer in lieu of the divine origin of Christianity. After a

good deal of loud boasting, after a large amount of supercilious sneering, we have here the result of that 'profound criticism' and that 'careful scholarship' which have been laboring for years, in Europe, to destroy the supernatural bases of faith. We are justified, from M. Renan's position and character, in taking it for granted, that his book is the best that modern unbelief has to offer, his theory the most satisfactory that the deniers of the divine origin of Christianity can frame.

In examining that theory, at the first, a suspicious thing strikes a calm observer. It is the reckless way in which M. Renan deals with his authorities. For, be it remarked that, with only one or two outside hints in Josephus and Tacitus, the Four Gospels contain *all* that we know of the 'Life of Jesus.' They are formally and professedly His biographies. They were expressly written to present the outlines of His life and teaching in connected form. All that we know of Him, His birth, life, and death, is contained in these four narrations. The utmost learning and the utmost simplicity here stand side by side. The most unlearned reader of The Continental is just as well informed, with the Four Gospels in his hand, as any 'member' of any 'Academy' under the sun. Out of these Four Gospels, M. Renan has to construct his 'Life of Jesus.' But he has *a theory*, and that theory does not seem to be the one set forth in the Four Gospels; so he just rejects whatever goes against his theory, garbles, clips, denies, assents, and colors, with an assurance, amusing for its impudence, if it were not so criminal for its recklessness.

On the very threshold he asserts, in the teeth of his sole authorities, that Jesus was born in *Nazareth*! He refers his startled reader to a footnote. That footnote informs him that the 'assessment under Quirinus, by which He is sought to be connected with Bethlehem,' took place ten years after. We are to take this on M. Renan's sole authority. We are to fling the Gospels over on the strength of a footnote! Now it is simply impossible that M. Renan can be ignorant that there are very satisfactory ways of explaining this difficulty, otherwise than by charging a *forgery*. Josephus, whom he cites to prove the *assessment* to be ten years after, would have informed him that the preliminary *enrolment* took place at the time mentioned, and that it *did* extend over Herod's dominions. Moreover, the authorities for this last fact are *not* Christian *only*, as he says. They are Josephus, a Jew, and Suetonius, a pagan.

This is only an instance, on the threshold, of what occurs, a hundred times, in the book. Any statement which stands in the way of the writer's hypothesis, is swept out of existence at one pen-stroke. Calm historical relations, evidently most essential portions of the writings, are treated as forgeries, or deceptions, without a condescending why or wherefore, if they embarrass the writer.

That large portion of the Gospels, the miracles, is scarcely worth a thought from M. Renan. He dismisses the whole question of miracles with a *bon mot*. 'Many people followed Jesus into the desert. Thanks to their extreme frugality, they lived there. They naturally believed they saw in that a miracle.' Now is not that wonderful! The circumstantial relation of the miraculous feeding is supposed to be satisfactorily explained by people 'naturally believing' that *frugality* was 'a miracle'! But the great miracle of all, the miracle which seals the story, which gives ground of hope and faith to all Christian men, that miracle, without which they have always felt the Gospel would be preached in vain, that grand consummating and awful miracle, which flashed brightness into the sepulchre, which shot the light of immortality athwart the darkness of Death, and gave mortal man a sure grasp on immortality, that great crowning miracle, the resurrection of our Lord, on which so much depended, which so many jealous eyes were watching, which was so early asserted on the very spot where it claims to have occurred—this M. Renan treats as unworthy serious refutation. It is not even necessary to try to disprove it. It is simply sufficient for him to mention 'the strong *imagination* of Mary Magdalene,' and to exclaim so *beautifully*!—'Divine power of love, sacred moments in which the passion of a hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God!'

There it is! The *doctrine* of the resurrection, and all that clings around it for humanity, the doctrine preached always as one of the foundations of the faith ('because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection'), and the *fact* of the resurrection, the fact always put forth as the clinching

argument, the justification of the whole story, thrown into the face of Jew and Greek as a perpetual challenge—this doctrine and this fact are disposed of by a bit of sickly sentiment!

Now, this sort of thing may be very rhetorical, and very beautiful, when done up in approved, sentimental French, but it is certainly neither logical nor philosophical. We have a right to insist that M. Renan shall come with no theory which compels him to reject half the facts unexamined, and to garble and misuse half the rest. Those facts stand on the same ground as all the others. The same authority which tells us that Christ lived at Nazareth, tells us also that He fed five thousand with five loaves and two small fishes. M. Renan accepts the first statement, without examination, and denies the second, without examination. He does this because he has made up his mind beforehand that *prima facie* a miracle is impossible. But that carries us out of the line of historical investigation altogether. That is a question of metaphysics. M. Renan's decision of the question is not admitted by an means universally, not even frequently. The truer decision as well as the more philosophical is that, *prima facie, all things are possible*, except contradictions.

At all events, we hold that the Four Evangelists stand on their own merits. They are not to be declared impostors, either in whole or in part, beforehand, in order to save a metaphysical theory.

The same logical viciousness shows itself in M. Renan's treatment of the Prophets. Daniel never could have written the book attributed to him, he says, because that book contains statements of fact which occurred long after Daniel! That is to say, M. Renan does not believe in such a thing as prophecy, and, by consequence, Daniel never wrote the book of Daniel! This is taking things for granted with a witness.

And, by the way, we may as well ease our minds just here concerning another trick of the school to which M. Renan belongs, and of which he furnishes many marked examples. We mean the trick of arbitrarily deciding by what they are pleased to call 'philological criticism,' all about all the books and nearly all the chapters in the Bible. 'Learned men are agreed that such and such chapters were not written by Isaiah.' 'It is clear, from internal evidence of style, that this book was made up of earlier scattered memoranda.' 'These chapters, it is evident, were not written till such and such a time.' 'The best critics are agreed that this narration was added long after the writing of the book.' This is the way they write, to the astonishment of the simple.

When we were younger, this sort of talk seemed to our simplicity to be exceedingly imposing. We actually believed that there were a set of people, in Germany, at least, who could look at a Hebrew chapter and tell you who wrote it, when he wrote it, how he wrote it, and why; and the who, when, how, and why, should be each different from those mentioned by the author of the book himself. As years removed the credulous simplicity of childhood, we found out that this was only a trick of the trade. We discovered that no two of these doctors agreed among themselves, that the line of argument they followed would disprove the authorship of any page ever written, that decisions from difference of style, wise as they might be, philologically, were, rationally and logically, nonsensical; for Burns, no doubt, wrote his *letters* as well as his *poems*, and Shakspeare's 'Sonnets' were written by the hand that wrote 'King Lear,' although, according to these wise doctors, it is assumed to be utterly impossible that the same man can use two styles, or that a man at seventy will write otherwise than he did at thirty. In short, we discovered that there is nothing more arbitrary, more opinionated, and more unphilosophical than this 'philological criticism.' Applied, as these wonderful German doctors apply it, to any book ever penned, and it can be shown, 'as the result of high critical ability,' that no author ever wrote his own book. It is the easiest thing in the world to prove that Shakspeare never wrote 'Shakspeare,' that Milton never wrote 'Paradise Lost,' that 'Johnson's Dictionary' just 'growed' like Topsey, and was never made at all, and, to name small things with great, that M. Renan never wrote the 'Life of Jesus.'

When we read, then, that 'it is certain that Isaiah never wrote this chapter,' that 'St. John could not possibly have written the fourth Gospel,' that 'this book is composed, undoubtedly, of fragments of earlier writings,' or that 'this' other 'is the growth of a certain school,' we advise simple Christians

to take it easy. They are to understand that the world goes on much as usual, and that their family Bibles still contain the old Table of Contents. There has been no wonderful discovery made, no ancient book catalogues have come to light, no files of ancient documents have been dug up. There are still just the old facts and the old evidence on which Christians made up their minds sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago. The amount of all this talk is only that 'the great Doctor Teufelsdroeck' or 'the learned Professor Von Baum' has hazarded a guess, and made an assertion, which every other 'great doctor' and 'learned professor' will contradict, and displace with another guess just as probable, in three months' time. There are men just as learned and just as honest who have examined their guesses, and find them poor inventions indeed. And we have a right to deny point blank the assertions so flippantly made by men like M. Renan. 'It is *universally acknowledged* that this book was never written by Daniel or Isaiah or Jeremiah,' '*It is certain* this chapter is an addition of such and such a date,' etc. It is *not* universally acknowledged. It is *not* certain. The whole thing is pure guesswork. There is only one way to prove the authorship of a book, and that is by *testimony*. There is nothing under the sun more absurd, philologically, than that a common and very poor stock-actor should have written 'Hamlet.' We know he did write it, however, not by 'internal evidence,' or from 'philological criticism,' but by plain human testimony to the *fact*. We cite that, and leave the 'internal' critics to their profound babble on vowels and consonants, on long and short syllables, and let them do with the fact the best they can.

In other words, there is no way by which I can determine whether St. John wrote his Gospel except by *testimony*. I do not know beforehand *how* St. John would write. I can therefore judge nothing by 'style.' All I can do is to ask of competent witnesses. I do ask. I am told by such witnesses, straight up to his own day, that he *did* write this Gospel, that this is the very one which we now have, for they cite it and mention its peculiarities. I accept the fact, as I do in the case of Shakspeare, and let the wise 'critics' settle it among them.

The attempt, therefore, on the part of M. Renan, to get rid of those large portions of the Gospels which embarrass him in his theory, by attempting to discredit their authorship, while, at the same time, he accepts other parts, that stand on the same authority, and the supercilious way in which he ignores that large part which the miracles fill, turning them off with a small witticism, or a smaller bit of sentiment, suggest, at the start, decided suspicions of the honesty of his intentions and the sufficiency of his theory.

We only hint at these things here. They occur all through his book. They are not evidence of learning or critical skill. There are no *secrets* for deciding such matters. The whole *data* have been public for ages. All the 'members of the Institute' together do not possess one grain of evidence that any ordinary scholar in America does not possess as well. M. Renan rejects, or discredits, or garbles, or slips over silently, because he finds it necessary for his theory. That is all. He pettifogs with his witnesses to establish his theory.

That theory is, that He, whom all Christians have called Our Lord, was a mere man, of what race is uncertain, born in Galilee of a man named Joseph and of a woman named Mary; who taught in Galilee and a little in Judea, and who was at last killed and buried, and so an end of *Him*. This theory M. Renan has to find in the Gospels, and there is, as we have hinted, very little of the Gospels left when he gets through. It is so palpably against them that he has to get rid of the most of them to make it stand.

Now this theory, like all others, must be put to the test. Will it explain the facts? We have seen how it is compelled to get rid of the Gospels. But we put that aside. Will it explain the history of Christianity? Will it explain its place to-day? Will it account for its effects?

The Jesus of M. Renan is a strange character. He is more difficult of comprehension than any mystery of orthodoxy. We ask where He gets His wondrous wisdom, this young carpenter, how *He* learned to speak 'as man never spoke?' and M. Renan sentimentalizes. We ask how He got this wondrous power over men, to lead them and control them, so that they followed Him and 'heard Him

gladly,' and M. Renan goes off into ecstasies over the 'delicious climate' and 'the lovely villages,' and the Arcadian simplicity of Galilee, as he fancies they once were, and expects us to be answered. His influence over women is accounted for more readily. M. Renan tells us, in his peculiar way, that 'this beautiful young man' had great power over the 'nervous' susceptibilities of Mary Magdalene; and Pilate's wife, having once seen him, 'dreamed about him' the next night, and sent to her husband to save him in consequence!

However, He begins His teaching. Where He learned it, how He learned it, why it took the form it did, how *He* came to give moral law to the world, where He found the words of wisdom and consolation—the divine words of power—for all generations, there is positively not one sentence of explanation. Of all the young Jews of His day, how came He by these powers and this omnipotent wisdom? Now the Christian theory *does* attempt an explanation. It gives an ample answer to the question. M. Renan gives no answer whatever. He flies to sentiment. We have all sorts of adjectives —'delicious,' 'enchanting, 'beautiful,' 'sweet,' 'charming'—he beats a whole female seminary at the business, in attempting to describe how, like full-grown babes, everybody in Galilee lived, *so* innocent, so simple, so Arcadian were they all—*and that is all*! What shall a man do, whom this fine style of novel writing doesn't answer—to whom, in fact, it seems just a bit of disgusting nonsense? Is this wonderful power, this omnipotent wisdom, a production of the 'delicious' climate? Is this all 'philosophical criticism' has to offer, and is he to accept that as more reasonable than the Gospel theory that they were supernatural and divine?

In this wonderful romantic dialect, M. Renan describes the beginning of our Lord's ministry. He is embarrassed, however, by the fact that, as Jesus goes on, He Himself makes claims, and sets up pretensions, and exercises powers, which are totally at variance with the proposed explanation. M. Renan cannot deny that He claimed to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Son of David, that He claimed to work 'miracles,' to possess supernatural powers, to be somewhat altogether different from the amiable, sentimental, young carpenter of his modern biographer.

How is this to be got on with? Why, by declaring boldly that Jesus was half deceiver and half deceived! by accepting the difficulty, and confessing that He cheated men for their good—that, as they wished to be deceived, He stooped to deceive them, and at last half deceived Himself!

We know nothing more thoroughly *immoral* than is M. Renan on this matter. This Jesus of his, about whom he sentimentalizes, whom he declares a thousand times to be so 'charming,' and so 'divine,' and the rest, turns out to be a deliberate cheat and quack, putting out claims He does not Himself believe, and acting in sham miracles which people coax Him, according to his biographer, to perform.

The raising of Lazarus, for instance, which M. Renan would like to turn out of the Gospels, but which he is forced to confess must stay—according to him, was a deliberate, planned, stage performance, a gross piece of juggling imposition. Now we do not object *per se* to M. Renan's taking that view of it. He has a perfect freedom of choice. We *do* object to the immorality, the essential blindness to right and wrong, which lead him to apologize for the cheat, and try to prove it a perfectly innocent and justifiable thing. We protest against confounding eternal distinctions, against debauching conscience by proving wrong right, and a cheat an innocent bit of acting, against claiming an impostor and a liar as the high priest of the world's 'absolute religion'!

But few of us, in this part of the world, can appreciate the transcendental reasoning that makes an impostor half divine, or a cheat holy. 'Good faith and imposture,' to quote our author, 'are words which, in our rigid conscience, are opposed like two irreconcilable terms,' though, he says, it is not so in 'the East,' from which our religion came, and was certainly far from being so with our Teacher! We cannot admire M. Renan here. The writing is very fine. He exhausts himself in his 'charming' style to make it all right, and show us that we have profound reason to admire this lying teacher, this cheating miracle monger, whom he holds up between us and the pure 'Son of Mary.' But it does not

answer. In this cold climate a lie is a lie, a cheat is a cheat, and a mountebank and impostor is not the teacher of 'the absolute religion of humanity!'

As M. Renan writes His life, that is the way in which the Founder of Christianity develops Himself. First we have the young man, amiable, sweet, 'charming,' enacting a 'beautiful pastoral' in the 'delicious climate of Galilee,' where it appears that nobody has anything to do save to enact 'pastorals,' although we are told '*brigandage* was common in Galilee,' which seems a strange accompaniment to 'pastorals.' Where He got His wisdom, how He came by these 'transcendent utterances,' which, we are told, 'some few' only, even now, are lofty enough to appreciate, we are not informed. There they are. But, right in the midst of them, this wonderful young man, uttering these 'charming' lessons, and these 'delicious' sayings, sets to work miracle-mongering, trying His hand at thaumaturgy and legerdemain, becomes an impostor and a mountebank, pretending, among other things, to raise a man who puts on a shroud, gets into a grave, and shams dead! At last He is taken, and then, in view of death, becomes penitent, reforms, and recovers His purity!

Now Thomas Paine was, in a way, an honest man. We can say that of him. Voltaire was, in his degree, honest too. Having said what M. Renan says, they did not stultify themselves logically. They honestly pronounced Christianity a delusion. We have respect for their consistency. But our modern man says that a cheat in religion is no cheat, a lie no lie, that a true saving faith can be built on a foundation of deception and trickery! He says it, and undertakes to prove it by *the convincing logic of sentimentality!*

M. Renan here is just *disgusting*. There are a few things in this world that do not mix. Right and wrong have something of a ditch between them. A lie is not own brother to the truth. If he thinks it worth while to write the life of an impostor, very well; only, when he has declared him so, and insisted on his being so, we humbly beg he will not turn round and insist on it that the religion *he* taught is divine!

If the credulity of believers is great, what shall we say of the credulity of Messieurs the philosophers, the unbelievers? But what shall we say of their *morality*?

But if this new theory fails to account for Christianity as a *true* system of religion, what shall we say of its coherence with Christianity as a *successful* system in action? This sentimental impostor conquers the civilized world. This 'charming' worker of sham wonders becomes a God to the millions who to-day lead mankind!

Here is where M. Renan's theory utterly breaks down, where it becomes not only utterly illogical and incoherent, but where it becomes too gross for any mortal credulity, and too blasphemously wicked for any ordinary sinfulness.

It is utterly incoherent, for it requires us to believe that a system, begun in fraud and deception, has proved itself the truest and most beneficent and sacred treasure to the world. M. Renan insists on both. From such a premise he drags such a conclusion.

Is there any plain Christian who dreads a sneer at Christian credulity? Let him be comforted. What credulity is like this? What miracle in the 'Four Gospels' begins to be wonderful compared with this miracle of the modern thaumaturge? The religion which has taught men truth—above all things, *truth*—which teaches utter horror of a lie, which insists on the bare, bald reality in heaven and earth, which has taught men hatred of the false as the meanest and most unmanly thing existing—this religion took its rise in claptrap miracles, was puffed into popularity by boasting pretensions, was born in trickery and nurtured by legerdemain! Its loftiest hopes, its deepest consolations are the offspring of clumsy jugglery and cheap prestidigitation!

But more: this religion, so born and nurtured, becomes the mistress of the earth. It is of no consequence that only a minority of men accept it. That minority hold the world in their hands. In fact, it seems from history, that any number of men, with this religion in their hearts, become half omnipotent—that *twelve* can take it and master humanity by its power. To-day the men who profess it can do what they will on the face of this planet. It has so seized temporal power, so moulded blind

force, so mastered strength—it has so conferred wisdom and valor and might on men, that those who have accepted it have been crowned above their kind, that they go everywhere as the acknowledged leaders and lords of the race, the vanguard of humanity.

And a deception has brought all this to pass, a delusion has produced these stern realities! Here's where the wickedness stands out nakedly! Is there a true God in heaven, or is Ahriman rightful lord? Is the lying devil, after all, supreme? Is a lie as good as the truth? Why, the very earth reels beneath us! *Is there any God at all?* Are truth and good and God mere dreams, that a cunning fraud like this can so prosper and prevail under the white heavens!

M. Renan's 'Life of Jesus' offers me that as a most reasonable theory! Believing in a *true* God and a *good* God, being utterly incapable of believing in the lying devil it proposes to me, this pleasant theory, that, beneath the face and eyes of that true God, a poor imposture, a cheap delusion becomes, not only the holiest thing, the purest thing, the most sanctifying thing, but also the strongest thing, the most victorious thing in all the world! If ever theory so played sleight of hand with cause and effect, if it ever so mingled and mixed right and wrong, and so taught that lies and truth were about the same, we have failed to meet with it. And if ever any theory required power of gullibility like this last and newest, we have failed to hear of that.

The fact is there is no escaping the honest conclusion that, unless Jesus Christ is what He claimed to be, *divine*, 'God manifest in the flesh,' 'the Son of the Father,' then He was simply an *impostor*. (He could not have been a self-deceived fanatic.) Now any man is free to accept the last horn of this dilemma, if he chooses. It is a free country. But if he takes that, we insist that he is *logically bound* to call Christianity a *cheat*, a *delusion*, a *snare and a curse to humanity*! He shall not ask us to swallow the monstrous and immoral proposition, that this outrageous lie and imposture is the glory, the blessing and hope of humanity!

And this is what M. Ernest Renan, in most melodious sentences, proposes. This is his theory of Christianity, its origin and its success.

This is the best thing philosophic and philologic unbelief has to offer, the most rational account it has to give in the year 1864. Surely unbelief must have large faith in human nature's capacity of spiritual swallow, if men are expected to take this down, as more reasonable than what they will hear in the next pulpit!

Nay, after all, the Christian theory of Christianity is the most rational yet. It has mysteries, but it calls them mysteries, things above reason. It accepts them, and so escapes absurdity—ends with no means, effects from no causes, wonders that spring out of the ground, divine teachers produced by a 'charming' climate, and impostures that are holy truths! Above all, it escapes moral idiocy, and holds there is a line between right and wrong! On the whole, it is, as yet, the only theory which explains all the facts, the only one of which the consequences may be logically accepted, which makes Christ or His religion reasonable or possible.

M. Renan's 'beautiful' young Galilean carpenter, with such power over 'hallucinated' Magdalens, conducting grand picnics in that 'charming' climate, and making life a May day, is not the world's mighty Deliverer; and his miracle-mongering demagogue, claiming to be the Son of David in lying genealogies, and the Son of God in blasphemous audacity, is not the world's Teacher of all Truth and Righteousness. The new Jesus is a poor substitute for the Divine Man whom we adore.

We cannot, therefore, accept the new theory. It is not logically competent to the facts. Established on garbled evidence with painful struggles, it will not, when completed, fulfil the conditions. It is not reasonable. It is not moral. We have desired to present this view of it. The details of criticism we leave to others, who can easily deal with M. Renan. We have aimed to show, what any plain reader can see, the unreasonableness and immorality of this theory of Christianity's origin.

As long as we have faith in a righteous God, so long can we never believe that the best, purest, and holiest religion is born in fraud and trickery. M. Renan's theory declares the purity and the holiness of Christianity, and yet insists on the trickery and the fraud: therefore we must reject his theory.

So long as we believe that a true God is *omnipotent*, we cannot believe that fraud and deception are masters of the world. But M. Renan insists that Christianity has mastered the world, and yet declares it founded upon fraud and deception. We must therefore reject M. Renan.

The fine writing, the sentiment, the abundant 'sweetness' of the book cannot make beautiful this monstrous perversion of reason, this insidious attack on the very distinction between God and Satan.

Voltaire's theory is comparatively honest, healthy, moral. Paine's is so. These men called things by their right names. They never undertook to upset the human conscience. Ernest Renan's theory is thoroughly *immoral*, and he only can accept it who denies that the world is governed by moral laws at all.

We reject his Jesus as a delusion and a dream. God never created such a creature. He exists nowhere save in M. Renan's pages.

In this blind, reeling world, in this weary, painful time, while the sobs of a dumb creation break along the shores of heaven in prayer, we cannot spare the real Jesus, the world's strong Deliverer, its conquering Lord! The vision He exhibited, of a stainless humanity, omnipotent in purity, loyalty, and truth, has flashed and flamed before the eyes of men, through the long night of the ages, their beacon fire of hope, their star of faith! We cannot spare Him *now*. In Him all is consistent, all is reasonable, all is harmonious. The Divine Man accounts for His wisdom, vindicates the origin of His power. In the vision of His face, Christianity and all its results are the natural works of His hand.

We turn to *His* Life. We leave M. Renan's little novel, and turn to the Godlike life of the typal Man, the Omnipotent and Eternal Man, who redeemed humanity, and bought the world, and conquered hell and death: we turn to *that* life, that death, that awful resurrection, and take heart and hope. No mere amiable, sentimental, 'beautiful,' or 'charming' young man will do. The world cries for its Lord! The race He ransomed looks to the 'Lion of Judah,' the 'Captain of the Lord's Host.' The mad, half-despairing struggle we have waged all these long centuries, can find only in 'the Son of Man,' in the omnipotent 'Son of God,' its explanation and its end: 'God was manifest in the Flesh, reconciling the World unto Himself!'

# ÆNONE:
# A TALE OF SLAVE LIFE IN ROME

## CHAPTER VII

For an instant only. When from Ænone's troubled gaze, the half-blinding film which the agitation of her apprehensive mind had gathered there, passed away, she no longer saw before her a proudly erect figure, flashing out from dark, wild eyes its defiant mastery, but a form again bent low in timorous supplication, and features once more overspread with a mingled imprint of sorrowful resignation, trusting devotion, and pleading humility.

That gleam of malicious triumph which had so brightened up the face of the slave, had come and gone like the lightning flash, and, for the moment, Ænone was almost inclined to believe that it was some bewildering waking dream. But her instinct told her that it was no mere imagination or fancy which could thus, at one instant, fill the heart with dread and change her bright anticipations of coming joy into a dull, aching foreboding of misery. It was rather her inner nature warning her not to be too easily ensnared, but to wait for coming evil with unfaltering watchfulness, and, for the purpose of baffling enmity, to perform the hardest task that can be imposed upon a guileless nature —that of repressing all outward sign of distrust, hiding the torture of the heart within, and meeting smile with smile.

But day after day passed on, and even to her watchful and strained attention there appeared no further sign of anything that could excite alarm. From morning until night there rested upon the face of the young Greek slave no expression other than that of tender, faithful, and pleased obedience. At the morning toilet, at the forenoon task of embroidery, or at the afternoon promenade, there was ever the same serene gaze of earnest devotion, and the same delighted alacrity to anticipate the slightest wish. Until at last Ænone began again to think that perhaps her perception of that one fleeting look might, after all, be but a flickering dream. And when, at times, she sat and heard the young girl speak, not with apparent method, but rather as one who is unwittingly drawn into discursive prattle, about her cottage home in Samos, and the lowly lover from whom the invading armies had torn her, and watched the moistened eye and the trembling lip with which these memories were dwelt upon, an inward pity and sympathy tempted her to forget her own distrust; until one day she was impelled to act as she had once desired, and began to pour out her whole heart to the young slave as to a friend. The words seemed of themselves to flow to her lips, as, bidding the girl be comforted, she told, in one short sentence, how she too had once lived in a tranquil cottage home, away from the bustle and fever of that imperial Rome, and had had her lover of low degree, and that both were still innocently dear to her.

All the while that the story had been welling forth from her lips, that inner instinct which so seldom deceives, told her that she was doing wrong; and when she had ended, she would have given worlds not to have spoken. But the words were beyond recall, and she could only gaze stealthily at the listener, and, with a dull feeling of apprehension nestling at the bottom of her heart, endeavor to mark their effect, and to imagine the possible consequences of her indiscretion. But Leta sat bending over her embroidery, and apparently still thinking, with tearful eye, upon her own exile from home. Perhaps she had not even heard all that had been said to her; though, if the words had really caught her ear, where, after all, could be the harm? It was no secret in Rome that Sergius Vanno had brought his spouse from a lowly home; and it was surely no crime, that, during those years of poverty which Ænone had passed through before being called to fill her present station, she had once suffered her girlish fancy to rest for a little while upon one of her own class. And fortunately she had not gone

further in her story, but at that point had left it to rest; making no mention of how that long-forgotten lover had so lately reappeared and confronted her.

Still there remained in her heart the irrepressible instinct that it would have been better if she had not spoken. And now, as she silently pondered upon her imprudence, it seemed as though her anxiety had suddenly endowed her brain with new and keener faculties of perception, so many startling ideas began to crowd in upon her. More particularly, full shape and tone seemed for the first time given to one terrible suspicion, which she had hitherto known only in a misty, intangible, and seldom recurring form—the suspicion that, if the passive girl before her were really an enemy, it was not owing to any mere ordinary impulse of fear, or envy, or inexplicable womanish dislike, but rather to secret rivalry.

That, within the past few days, Sergius had more and more exhibited toward her an indifference, which even his studied attempts to conduct himself with an appearance of his former interest and affection did not fully hide, Ænone could not but feel. That within her breast lurked the terrible thought that perhaps the time had forever passed for her to come to him as to a loving friend, and there fearlessly pour out her tribulations, her secret tears confessed. But throughout all this change, though it became each day more strongly marked, she had tried to cheat herself into the belief that the romantic warmth of a first attachment could not in any case be expected to last for many years—that in meeting indifference she was merely experiencing a common lot—that beneath his coolness there still lurked the old affection, as the lava will flow beneath the hardened crust—and that, if she were indeed losing the appearance of his love, it was merely because the claims of the court, the exigencies of the social world, or the demands of ambition had too much usurped his attention.

But now a thousand hitherto unregarded circumstances began to creep into her mind as so many evidences that his affection seemed passing from her; not simply because the claims of duty or ambition were stifling in his heart all power to love, but because he had become secretly attached elsewhere. The interested gaze with which he followed the motions of the Greek girl—the solicitude which he seemed to feel that in all things she should be treated, not only tenderly, but more luxuriously than ever fell to the lot of even the highest class of slaves—his newly acquired habit of strolling into the room and throwing himself down where he could lazily watch her—all these, and other circumstances, though individually trivial, could not fail, when united, to give cogency to the one terrible conviction of secret wrong. Whether Leta herself had any perception of all this, who could yet tell? It might be that she was clothed in innocent unconsciousness of her master's admiration, or that, by the force of native purity, she had resisted his advances. And, on the other hand, it might be that not merely now, but long before she had been brought into the house, there had been a secret understanding between the two; and that, with undeviating and unrelenting cunning, she was still ever drawing him still closer within the folds of her fascinations. Looking upon her, and noting the humble and almost timorous air with which she moved about, as though seeking kindness and protection, and the eloquence of mute appeal for sympathy which lay half hidden in her dark eyes beneath the scarcely raised lids, and rested in her trembling lips, who could doubt her? But marking the haughtiness of pride with which at times she drew up her slight figure to its utmost height, the ray of scorn and malice which flashed from those eyes, and the lines of firm, unpitying determination which gathered about the compressed corners of those lips, who could help fearing and distrusting her?

Time or chance alone could resolve the question, and meanwhile, what course could Ænone take? Not that of sending the object of her suspicion to another place; for even if she had the power to do so, she might not be able to accomplish it without such open disturbance that the whole social world of Rome would learn the degrading fact that she had been jealous of her own slave. Not—as she was sometimes almost tempted—that of forgetting her pride, and humbling herself before her enemy, to beg that she would not rob her of all that affection which had once been lavished upon herself; for, if the Greek girl were innocent, useless and feeble pity would be the only result, while, if she were guilty, it would but lead to further secret wiles and malicious triumph. Nor that of accusing

her husband of his fault; for such a course, alas! could never restore lost love. There could, indeed, be but one proper way to act. She must possess her soul in patience and prudent dissimulation; and, while affecting ignorance of what she saw and heard, must strive by kindness and attention to win back some, if not all, of the true affection of former days.

Thus sorrowfully reflecting, she left the room, not upon any especial intent, but simply to avoid the presence of the Greek, who, she could not help feeling, was all the while, beneath the disguise of that demure expression, closely watching her. Passing into another apartment, she saw that Sergius had there sauntered in, and had thrown himself down upon a lounge at the open window, where, with one hand resting behind his head, he lay half soothed into slumber by the gentle murmur of the courtyard fountain. Stealing up gently behind him, with a strange mingling of affectionate desire to gain his attention, and a morbid dread of bringing rebuke upon herself by awakening him, Ænone stooped down and lightly touched his forehead with her lips.

'Ah, Leta!' he exclaimed, starting up as he felt the warm pressure. Then, perceiving his mistake, he lowered his eyes with some confusion, and perhaps a slight feeling of disappointment, and tried to force a careless laugh; which died away, however, as he saw how Ænone stood pale and trembling at receiving a greeting so confirmatory of all her apprehensions.

'It is not Leta—it is only I,' she murmured at length, in a tone of plaintive sadness, which for the moment touched his heart. 'I am sorry that I awakened you. But I will go away again.'

'Nay, remain,' he exclaimed, restraining her by the folds of her dress, and, with a slight effort, seating her beside him upon the lounge. 'You are not—you must not feel offended at such a poor jest as that?'

'Is it all a jest?' she inquired. 'Can you say that the greeting you gave me did not spring inadvertently from the real preoccupation of your mind?'

'Of the mind? Preoccupation?' said Sergius. 'By the gods! but it is a difficult question to answer. I might possibly, in some dreamy state, have been thinking carelessly of that Greek girl whom you have so constantly about you. Even you cannot but acknowledge that she has her traits of beauty; and if so, it is hard for a man not to admire them.'

'For mere admiration of her, I care but little,' she responded. 'But I would not that she should learn to observe it. And what could I do, if she, perceiving it, were to succeed in drawing your love from me? What then would there be for me to do, except to die?'

'To die? This is but foolish talk, Ænone,' he said; and he fastened an inquiring gaze upon her, as though wishing to search into her soul, and find out how much of his actions she already knew. Evidently some fleeting expression upon her countenance deceived him into believing that she had heard or seen more than he had previously supposed, for, with another faint attempt at a careless laugh, he continued:

'And if, at the most, there has been some senseless trifling between the girl and myself—a pressure of the hand, or a pat upon the cheek, when meeting by any chance in hall or garden—would you find such fault with this as to call it a withdrawal of my love from you? To what, indeed, could such poor, foolish pastime of the moment amount, that it should bring rebuke upon me?'

To nothing, indeed, if judged by itself alone, for that was not the age of the world when every trivial departure from correctness of conduct was looked upon as a crime; and had this been all, and the real affection of his heart had remained with her, Ænone would have taken comfort. But now she knew for certain that, in uncomplainingly enduring any familiarities, Leta could not, at all times, have maintained her customary mien of timorous retirement, and must, therefore, to some extent, have shown herself capable of acting a deceitful part; and that even though the deceit may have stopped short of further transgression, it was none the less certain that in future no further trust could be reposed in her. Gone forever was that frail hope to which, against all warnings of instinct, Ænone had persisted in clinging—the hope that in the Greek girl she might succeed in finding a true and honest friend.

Seeing that she remained absorbed and speechless, Sergius believed that she was merely jealously pondering upon these trivial transgressions, and endeavored, by kind and loving expressions, to remove the evil effects of his unguarded admission. Gathering her closer in his arms, he strove once more, by exerting those fascinations which had hitherto so often prevailed, to calm her disturbed fancies, and bring back again her confidence in him. But now he spoke almost in vain. Conscious, as Ænone could not fail to be, of the apparent love and tenderness with which he bent his eyes upon her, and of the liquid melody of his impassioned intonations, and half inclined, as she felt, at each instant to yield to the impulse which tempted her to throw her arms about his neck and promise from henceforth to believe unfalteringly all that he might say, whatever opposing evidences might stand before her, there was all the while the restraining feeling that this show of affection was but a pretence wherewith to quiet her inconvenient reproaches—that at heart he was playing with deceit—that the husband was colluding with the slave to blind her eyes—and that the love and friendship of both lord and menial had forever failed her.

'But hold to your own suspicions, if you will,' he said, at length, with testy accent, as he saw how little all his efforts had moved her. 'I have spoken in my defence all that I need to speak, even if excuse were necessary; and it is an ill reward to receive only cold and forbidding responses in return.'

'Answer me this,' she exclaimed, suddenly rousing into action, and looking him earnestly in the face; 'and as you now answer, I will promise to believe you, for I know that, whatever you may have done, you will not, if appealed to upon your honor, tell me that which is not true. About the trivial actions which you have mentioned I care little; but is there in your heart any real affection for that girl? If you say that there is not, I will never more distrust you, but will go out from here with a soul overflowing with peace and joy as when first you came to take me to your side. But if, on the contrary, you say that you love her, I will—'

'Will do what?' he exclaimed, seeing that she hesitated, and almost hoping that she would utter some impatient threat which in turn would give him an excuse for anger.

'Will pass out from this room, sad and broken hearted, indeed—but not complaining of or chiding you; and will only pray to the gods that they may, in their own time, make all things once more go aright, and so restore your heart to me.'

Sergius hesitated. Never before had he been so tempted to utter an untruth. If he now did so, he knew that he would be believed, and that not only would she be made once more happy, but he would be left unwatched and unsuspected to carry on his own devices. But, on the other hand, he had been appealed to upon his honor, and, whatever his other faults, he had too much nobility of soul to lie. And so, not daring to confess the truth, he chose the middle path of refusing any direct response at all.

'Now is not this a singular thing,' he exclaimed, 'that no man can ever let his eyes rest upon a pretty face without being accused of love for it? While, if a woman does the same, no tongue can describe the clamor with which she repels the insinuation of aught but friendly interest. Can you look me in the eye and tell me that mine is the only voice you ever listened to with love?'

'Can you dare hint to me that I have ever been unfaithful to you, even in thought or word?' cried Ænone, stung with sudden anger by the imputation, and rendered desperate by her acute perception of the evasiveness of his answer. 'Do you not know that during the months which you so lately passed far away from me, there was not one person admitted here into society with me who would not have had your firm approval—and that I kept your image so lovingly before my eyes, and your memory so constant in my heart, as to become almost a reproach and a sarcasm to half who knew me?'

'But before that—before I came to you—can you say that no other eyes had ever looked lovingly into yours, and there met kindred response?'

'Have you the right to inquire into what may have happened before you met me? What young girl is there who, some time or other, has not modestly let her thoughts dwell upon innocent love? Is there wrong in this? Should there have been a spirit of prescience in my mind to forewarn me that I

must keep my heart free and in vacant loneliness, because that, after many years, you were to come and lift me from my obscurity?'

'Then, upon your own showing, you acknowledge that there was once another upon whom your eyes loved to look?' he cried, half gladdened that he had found even this poor excuse to transfer the charge of blame from himself. 'And how can I tell but that you have met with him since?'

'I have met him since,' she quietly answered, driven to desperation by the cruel insinuation.

In his heart attaching but little importance to such childish affections as she might once have cherished, and having had no other purpose in his suggestion than that of shielding himself from further inquiry by inflicting some trifling wound upon her, Sergius had spoken hesitatingly, and with a shamefaced consciousness of meanness and self-contempt. But when he listened to her frank admission—fraught, as it seemed to him, with more meaning than the mere naked words would, of themselves, imply, an angry flush of new-born jealousy overspread his features.

'Ha! You have met him since?' he exclaimed. 'And when, and where? And who, then, is this fortunate one?'

Ænone hesitated. Now, still more bitterly than ever before, she felt the sad consciousness of being unable to pour out to her husband her more secret thoughts and feelings. If she could have told, with perfect assurance of being believed, that in so lately meeting the man whom she had once imagined she loved, she had looked upon him with no other feeling than the dread of recognition, joined to a friendly and sisterly desire to procure his release from captivity and his restoration to his own home, she would have done so. But she felt too well that the once-aroused jealousy of her lord might now prevent him from reposing full and generous trust and confidence in her—that he would be far more likely to interpret all her most innocent actions wrongly, and to surround her with degrading espionage—and that, in the end, the innocent captive would probably be subjected to the bitterest persecutions which spite and hatred could invent.

'I have met him,' she said at length, 'but only by chance, and without being recognized or spoken to by him. Nor do I know whether I shall ever chance to meet him again. Is this a crime? Oh, my lord, what have I done that you should thus strive to set your face against me? Do you not, in your secret soul, know and believe that there is no other smile than yours for which I live, and that, without the love with which you once gladdened me, there can be no rest or peace for me on earth? Tell me, then, that all this is but a cruel pleasantry to prove my heart, and that there has nothing come between us —or else let me know the worst, in order that I may die.'

Sliding down, until her knees touched the floor, and then winding one arm slowly about his neck, she hid her face in his breast, and, bursting into tears, sobbed aloud. It was not merely the reactionary breaking down of a nervous system strung to the highest point of undue excitement. It was the half consciousness of a terrible fear lest the day might come in which, goaded by injustice and neglect, she might learn no longer to love the man before her—the wail of a stricken soul pleading that the one to whom her heart had bound her might not fail in his duty to her, but, by a resumption of his former kindness and affection, might retain her steadfastly in the path of love.

Touched by the spectacle of her strong agony—aroused for the moment to the true realization of all the bitterness and baseness of his unkindness toward her—moved, perhaps, by memories of that time when between them there was pleasant and endearing confidence, and when it was not she who was obliged to plead for love—Sergius drew his arm more closely about her, and, bending over, pressed his lips upon her forehead. If at that moment the opportunity had not failed, who can tell what open and generous confessions might not have been uttered, unrestrained forgiveness sealed, and future miseries prevented? But at the very moment when the words seemed trembling upon his lips, the door softly opened, and Leta entered.

# THE DOVE

Upon the 'pallid bust of Pallas' sat
The Raven from the 'night's Plutonian shore;'
His burning glance withered my wasting life,
His ceaseless cry still tortured as before:
'Lenore! Lenore! ah! never—nevermore!'

The weary moments dragged their crimson sands
Slow through the life-blood of my sinking heart.
I counted not their flow; I only knew
Time and Eternity were of one hue;
That immortality were endless pain
To one who the long lost could ne'er regain—
There was no hope that Death would Love restore:
'Lenore! Lenore! ah! never—nevermore!'

Early one morn I left my sleepless couch,
Seeking in change of place a change of pain.
I leaned my head against the casement, where
The rose she planted wreathed its clustering flowers.
How could it bloom when she was in the grave?
The birds were carolling on every spray,
And every leaf glittered with perfumed dew;
Nature was full of joy, but, wretched man!
Does God indeed bless only birds and flowers?
As thus I stood—the glowing morn without,
Within, the Raven with its blighting cry,
All light the world, all gloom the hopeless heart—
I prayed in agony, if not in faith;
Yet still my saddened heart refused to soar,
And even summer winds the burden bore:
'Lenore! Lenore! ah! never—nevermore!'

With these wild accents ringing through my heart,
There was no hope in prayer! Sadly I rose,
Gazing on Nature with an envious eye,
When, lo! a snowy Dove, weaving her rings
In ever-lessening circles, near me came;
With whirring sound of fluttering wings, she passed
Into the cursed and stifling, haunted room,
Where sat the Raven with his voice of doom—
His ceaseless cry from the Plutonian shore:
'Lenore! Lenore! ah! never—nevermore!'

The waving of the whirring, snowy wings,
Cooled the hot air, diffusing mystic calm.

Again I shuddered as I marked the glare
Which shot from the fell Raven's fiendish eye,
The while he measured where his pall-like swoop
Might seize the Dove as Death had seized Lenore:
'Lenore!' he shrieked, 'ah, never—nevermore!'

Hovered the Dove around an antique cross,
Which long had stood afront the pallid bust
Of haughty Pallas o'er my chamber door:
Neglected it had been through all the storm
Of maddening doubts born from the demon cry
Reëchoing from the night's Plutonian shore:
'Lenore! Lenore! ah! never—nevermore!'

I loved all heathen, antique, classic lore,
And thus the cross had paled before the brow
Of Pallas, radiant type of Reason's power.
But human reason fails in hours of woe,
And wisdom's goddess ne'er reopes the grave.
What knows chill Pallas of corruption's doom?
Upon her massive, rounded, glittering brow
The Bird of Doubt had chos'n a fitting place
To knell into my heart forever more:
'Ah I never, nevermore! Lenore! Lenore!'

The Raven's plumage, in the kindling rays,
Shone with metallic lustre, sombre fire;
His fiendish eye, so blue, and fierce, and cold,
Froze like th' hyena's when she tears the dead.
The sculptured beauty of the marble brow
Of Pallas glittered, as though diamond-strewn:
Haughty and dazzling, yet no voice of peace,
But words of dull negation darkly fell
From Reason's goddess in her brilliant sheen!
No secret bears she from the silent grave;
She stands appalled before its dark abyss,
And shudders at its gloom with all her lore,
All powerless to ope its grass-grown door.
Can Pallas e'er the loved and lost restore?
Hear her wild Raven shriek: 'Lenore! no more!'

With gloomy thoughts and thronging dreams oppressed,
I sank upon the 'violet velvet chair,
Which she shall press, ah, never, nevermore!'
And gazed, I know not why, upon the cross,
On which the Dove was resting its soft wings,
Glowing and rosy in the morn's warm light.
I cannot tell how long I dreaming lay,
When (as from some old picture, shadowy forms

Loom from a distant background as we gaze,
So bright they gleam, so soft they melt away,
We scarcely know whether 'tis fancy's play
Or artist's skill that wins them to the day)
There grew a band of angels on my sight,
Wreathing in love around the slighted cross.
One swung a censer, hung with bell-like flowers,
Whence tones and perfumes mingling charmed the air;
Thick clouds of incense veiled their shadowy forms,
Yet could I see their wings of rainbow light,
The wavings of their white arms, soft and bright.
Then she who swung the censer nearer drew—
The perfumed tones were silent—lowly bent
(The long curls pouring gold adown the wings),
She knelt in prayer before the crucifix.
Her eyes were deep as midnight's mystic stars,
Freighted with love they trembling gazed above,
As pleading for some mortal's bitter pain:
When answered—soft untwined the clasping hands,
The bright wings furled—my heart stood still to hear
'The footfalls tinkle on the tufted floor'—
The eyes met mine—O God! my lost Lenore!
Too deeply awed to clasp her to my heart,
I knelt and gasped—'Lenore! my lost Lenore!
Is there a home for Love beyond the skies?
In pity answer!—shall we meet again?'
Her eyes in rapture floated; solemn, calm,
Then softest music from her lips of balm
Fell, as she joined the angels in the air!
Her words forever charmed away despair!

'Above all pain,
We meet again!

'Kneel and worship humbly
Round the slighted cross!
Death is only seeming—
Love is never loss!
In the hour of sorrow
Calmly look above!
Trust the Holy Victim—
Heaven is in His love!

'Above all pain,
We meet again!

'Never heed the Raven—
Doubt was born in hell!
How can heathen Pallas

Faith of Christian tell?
With the faith of angels,
Led by Holy Dove,
Kneel and pray before Him—
Heaven is in His love!

'Above all pain,
We meet again!'

Then clouds of incense veiled the floating forms;
I only saw the gleams of starry wings,
The flash from lustrous eyes, the glittering hair,
As chanting still the *Sanctus* of the skies,
Clear o'er the *Misereres* of earth's graves,
Enveloped in the mist of perfumed haze,
In music's spell they faded from my gaze.
Gone—gone the vision! from my sight it bore
My lost, my found, my ever loved Lenore!

Forgotten scenes of happy infant years,
My mother's hymns around my cradle-bed,
Memories of vesper bell and matin chimes,
Of priests and incensed altars, dimly waked.
The fierce eye of the Raven dimmed and quailed,
His burnished plumage drooped, yet, full of hate,
Began he still his 'wildering shriek—'Lenore!'
When, lo! the Dove broke in upon his cry—
She, too, had found a voice for agony;
Calmly it fell from heaven's cerulean shore:
'Lenore! Lenore! forever—evermore!'

Soon as the Raven heard the silvery tones,
Lulling as gush of mountain-cradled stream,
With maddened plunge he fell to rise no more,
And, in the sweep of his Plutonian wings,
Dashed to the earth the bust of Pallas fair.
The haughty brow lay humbled in the dust,
O'ershadowed by the terror-woven wings
Of that wild Raven, as by some dark pall.
Lift up poor Pallas! bathe her fainting brow
With drops of dewy chrism! take the beak
Of the false Raven from her sinking soul!
Oh, let the Faith Dove nestle in her heart,
Her haughty reason low at Jesu's feet,
While humble as a child she cons the lore:
'The loved, the lost, forever—evermore!'

As if to win me to the crucifix,
The Dove would flutter there, then seek my breast.

The heart must feel its utter orphanage,
Before it makes the cross its dearest hope!
I knelt before the holy martyred form,
The perfect Victim given in perfect love,
The highest symbol of the highest Power,
*Self-abnegation perfected in God*!
Circling the brow like diadem, there shone
Each letter pierced with thorns and dyed in blood,
Yet dazzling vision with the hopes of heaven:
'I am the Resurrection and the Life!'
Upon the outstretched hands, mangled and torn,
I found that mighty truth the heart divines,
Which strews our midnight thick with stars, solves doubts,
And makes the chasm of the yawning grave
The womb of higher life, in which the lost
Are gently rocked into their angel forms—
That truth of mystic rapture—'God is Love!'

Still chants the snowy Dove from heaven's shore:
'Lenore! Lenore! forever! evermore!'

# THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND ITS PECULIARITIES

Few of the people of the North have ever inquisitively considered the Mississippi River, and as a consequence its numerous peculiarities are not generally known. Indeed, its only characteristic features are supposed to be immensity of proportions rather than any specific variation from the universal nature of rivers. Many there are that have never seen the river, and have conceptions of its appearance merely in imagination; others have been more fortunate, have crossed its turbid flood, or have been borne upon its noble bosom the full breadth of the land, from beautiful Minnesota to its great reservoir in the South, the Gulf of Mexico. As the result of this experience, great have been the sensations of satisfaction or disappointment. Many have turned away with their extravagant anticipations materially chagrined. This might be expected in a casual observer. It is true, some portions of the Mississippi do not present that vastness which a person would very naturally expect, having previously accepted literally the figurative appellations that have been applied to it. The Mississippi is not superficially a great stream, but when it is recognized as the mighty conduit of the surplus waters of fifty large streams, some of which are as large as itself, besides receiving innumerable of less pretensions—when we consider, too, the great physical phenomena which it presents in its turbid waters, its islands, its bars, and its bayous, its vast banks of alluvial deposit, its omnipotent force, and the signal futility of all human endeavors to control it, in this phase is it truly the 'Father of Waters,' and 'the most wonderful of rivers.'

In a commercial point of view is the Mississippi equally as remarkable as in its physical presentations. It is the aorta through which, from the heart of the nation, flow the bountiful returns of industrious and productive labor, which thus find an outlet to all parts of the world, opening an avenue of trade for millions of energetic men and fertile acres. Thus not only is it the life-supporting, but as well the life-imparting artery of a great section of the republic.

But it is unnecessary to speak of the commercial importance of the river. This is patent to everybody. Let us, however, unfold some of its remarkable and singular phenomena, which have never occurred to many, and may at this particular time be of interest to all, even those who have given the subject some study. Let us first briefly glance at its history.

In 1539, Ferdinand de Soto, Governor of Cuba, leaving that island in charge of his wife, set sail for Florida, where he soon safely disembarked, and sent his ships back, in order to leave no opportunity for relentment in the stern resolves of his followers. After a somewhat erratic journey, on his way passing through Georgia, Alabama, and Northern Mississippi, he struck the 'Great River' at the Lower Chickasaw Bluffs, as they are still called, and upon which now stands the city of Memphis. The expedition crossed the river at that point, and spent some time in exploring the country beyond, until they found themselves upon the White River, about two hundred miles from its entrance into the Mississippi. From there a small expedition set out toward the Missouri, but soon returned, bringing an unfavorable report. From the White the expedition moved toward the hot springs and saline confluents of the Washita. In this neighborhood they wintered. In the spring of 1542, De Soto and his followers descended the Washita in canoes, but became entangled in the bayous and marshes of the Red River, to which the Washita, through the Black, is tributary. At length, however, they reached the Mississippi. Here a number of explorations were conducted, but with no success as regards the object of the expedition, a search of gain. It was in the midst of these explorations, at the mouth of the Red, while surrounded by the most implacable Indian hostility, a malignant fever seized the spirit and head of the enterprise, and on May 21st, 1542, De Soto died. Amid the sorrows of the moment and fears of the future, his body was wrapped in a mantle, and sunk in the middle of the river. A requiem broke the midnight gloom, and the morning rose upon the consternation of the survivors. It has indeed been aptly said, that De Soto 'sought for gold, but found nothing so great as his burial place.'

The men now looked about them for a new leader. Their choice fell upon Luis de Moscoso. This man was without enterprise or capacity. After enduring every calamity, the party built seven brigantines, and in seventeen days, July, 1543, passed out of the mouth of the river, and followed the coast toward the east. Out of six hundred, but few over three hundred ever returned to Cuba.

From the expedition of De Soto more than a century elapsed before any further discoveries were made. In May, 1673, Marquette, a priest, and Jolliet, a trader, and five men, made some explorations of the river.

The great work of discovery was reserved for Robert Cavelier de la Salle, a Frenchman. By his commands, Father Louis Hennepin made the discovery of the Upper Mississippi, as far as the Falls of St. Anthony. In January, 1682, La Salle himself, with twenty-three Frenchmen and eighteen Indians, set out for the exploration of the Lower Mississippi, entering the river from the Illinois, and descending it until he arrived at the Passes of the Delta. Here, to his surprise, he found the river divided into three channels. A party was sent by each, La Salle taking the western, and on April 9th the open sea was reached. The usual ceremonies attendant upon any great discovery were repeated here.

Enlivened by success, the party returned to Quebec. La Salle returned to France, and in 1684, aided by his Government, set sail with four vessels, for the discovery of the river from the sea. In this he was unsuccessful. After encountering several storms and losing one of his vessels, the expedition entered St. Louis Bay (St. Bernard) on the coast of Texas. The party disembarked, one of the vessels returned to France, and the others were lost on the coast. Thus cut off, La Salle made every effort to discover the river by land; but in every attempt he failed. At length he was assassinated by one of his followers on the 19th of March, 1687. Thus terminated the career of the explorer of the Mississippi.

The discovery of the mouth of the river from the sea, was an event of some years later, and was consummated by Iberville, in 1699. This person spent some time in navigating the river and the waters adjacent to its mouth. His brother, Bienville, succeeded him in these enterprises. A few years later, and we find settlements springing up upon the banks of the river. Since that time it has attracted a numerous population, and to-day, though desolated in parts by the contentions of armies, there is certainty in the belief that at some time these people of the great river will wield a mighty power in the political and commercial destiny of the American continent.

The Mississippi proper rises in the State of Minnesota, about 47° and some minutes north latitude, and 94° 54' longitude west, at an elevation of sixteen hundred and eighty feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, and distant from it two thousand eight hundred and ninety-six miles, its utmost length, upon the summit of Hauteurs de Terre, the dividing ridge between the rivulets confluent to itself and those to the Red River of the North. Its first appearance is a tiny pool, fed by waters trickling from the neighboring hills. The surplus waters of this little pool are discharged by a small brook, threading its way among a multitude of very small lakes, until it gathers sufficient water, and soon forms a larger lake. From here a second rivulet, impelled along a rapid declination, rushes with violent impetuosity for some miles, and subsides in Lake Itasca. Thence, with a more regular motion, until it reaches Lake Cass, from whence taking a mainly southeasterly course, a distance of nearly seven hundred miles, it reaches the Falls of St. Anthony. Here the river makes in a few miles a descent of sixteen feet. From this point to the Gulf, navigation is without further interruption, and the wonders of the Mississippi begin.

It is not possible to give, with complete exactness, the outlines of the immense valley drained by the Mississippi, yet, with the assistance of accurate surveys, we can make an approximation, to say the least, which will convey some idea of the physical necessity of the river to the vast area through the centre of which it takes its course.

We will say:

| From the highest point of land | *Miles.* |
|---|---|
| between the mouth of the | |
| Atchafalaya and Mississippi | |
| Rivers, dividing the headwaters | |
| of their confluents; thence | |
| along the dividing ridge of tributaries | |
| confluent to the Sabine | |
| and other Texas streams from | |
| those of the Red, in a north-westerly | |
| course, to the Rocky | |
| Mountains, thence taking a line | |
| separating the headwaters of | |
| the Red, Arkansas, and tributary | |
| streams, on the east, from | |
| the Rio Grande and tributaries | |
| toward the south, and the Colorado | |
| toward the west, say, | 1,300 |
| | |
| Thence, pursuing the dividing | |
| summit of the Rocky Mountains, | |
| to the Marias, tributary | |
| to the Missouri, in Dakota, say, | 700 |
| | |
| Thence, including the headwaters | |
| of the Missouri, and taking | |
| direction southeasterly, | |

Within this extensive limit we find, from surveys, the following aggregate area in square miles, estimated by valleys:

| | *Square Miles.* |
|---|---|
| The valley of the Ohio, | 200,000 |
| The valley of the Mississippi proper, | 180,000 |
| The valley of the Missouri, | 500,000 |
| The valley of the Lower Mississippi, | 330,000 |
| | ——— |
| Total area, | 1,210,000 |

As a natural consequence of the drainage of this immense area, the Mississippi receives into its waters a large amount of suspended earthy matter. This, however, does not very strikingly appear on the upper river, its own banks and those of its tributaries being more of a gravelly character and less friable than lower down. The gravity of particles, therefore, worn from the bed and sides of the channel above, unless the current be exceedingly strong, is greater than the buoyant capacity of the water, and falls to the bottom, along which, sometimes, it is forced by the abrasion of the water, until it meets some obstruction, which gathers the particles into shoal formations. This fact causes much inconvenience in the navigation of the upper rivers.

It is not until we reach the confluence of the streams of Southern Illinois and Missouri, that the sediment of the river becomes striking. Those streams, freighted with the rich loam and vegetable matter of the prairies of the east and west, soon change entirely the appearance of the Mississippi. Above the Missouri, the river is but slightly tinged; and indeed, after that great current enters, for some distance the two run side by side in the same channel, and yet are divided by a very distinct line of demarcation. It is only after the frequent sinuosities of the channel, that the two waters are thrown into each other and fairly blend. The sedimentary condition of the Missouri is so great that drift floating upon its muddy surface, by accretion becomes so heavily laden with earthy matter that it sinks to the bottom. This precipitation of drift has taken place to such an extent, that the bed of the Missouri is in many places completely covered to a great depth by immense fields of logs. Of all the silt thrown into the Mississippi, the Missouri furnishes about one third.

After receiving the Missouri, next enters the Ohio. The water of this river is less impregnated than the Missouri, though not by any means free from silt. The country through which it flows is mountainous, and the soil hard, and does not afford the same facility of abrasive action as that of the other rivers.

From the mouth of the Ohio, the Mississippi pursues a course of nearly four hundred miles, when it receives the turbid waters of the White and Arkansas Rivers. In the intervening distance a large number of small currents, more or less largely sedimentary, according to the character of the country through which they run, enter the Mississippi, in the aggregate adding materially to the sediment of the receiving stream. The White and Arkansas carry in their waters a large amount of

unprecipitated matter. In this vicinity, too, sets in that singular system of natural safeguards of the surrounding country, the bayous. The country here also changes its appearance, becoming flat and swampy, and in some parts attaining but a few feet above the flood of the river, whereas in other parts, as we approach the Gulf, the country is even lower than the river.

The miasmatic and poisonous water of the Yazoo next enters, about ten miles above Vicksburg. This river is more deeply impregnated with a certain kind of impurities than any other tributary of the Mississippi. The waters are green and slimy, and almost sticky with vegetable and animal decomposition. During the hot season the water is certain disease, if taken into the stomach. The name is of Indian origin, and signifies 'River of Death.' The Yazoo receives its supply from bayous and swamps, though it has several considerable tributaries.

Below the Yazoo, on the west side, enters the Red. The name indicates the peculiar caste of its water. This river carries with it the washings of an extensive area of prairies and swamps, and is the last of the great tributaries. Hence the tendency of streams is directly to the Gulf, and that network of lateral branches, of which we will hereafter speak, begins.

We have only considered the most prominent tributaries: the sediment also brought down by the numerous smaller streams is very great, and makes great additions to the immense buoyant matter of the Mississippi.

The river itself from its own banks scours the larger portion of the sediment it contains; and in so gigantic a scale is this carried on, that it can be seen without the exercise of any very remarkable powers of sight. It is not by the imperceptible degrees usually at work in other streams, but often involves in its execution many acres of adjoining land. It will be interesting to consider this more fully.

By a curious freak of nature, the tendency of the channel of the Mississippi is always toward one or the other of its banks, being influenced by the direction of its bends. The principle is one of nicely regulated refraction. If the river were perfectly straight, the gravity and inertia of its waters would move in a right line, with a velocity beyond all control. But we find the river very sinuous, and the momentum of current consequently lessened. For example, striking in an arm of the river, by the inertia of the moving volume, the water is thrown, and with less velocity, upon the opposite bank, which it pursues until it meets another repellent obstacle, from which it refracts, taking direction again for the other side. Above the Missouri, the river is principally directed by the natural trough of the valley. Below this, however, the channel is purely the work of the river itself, shaped according to the necessities of sudden changes or obstructions. This is proven by the large number of old and dry beds of the river frequently met with, the channel having been diverted in a new direction by the accumulation of sediment and drift which it had not the momentum to force out.

Where the gravity of the greatest volume and momentum of water falls upon the bed of the river, there is described the thread of the channel, and all submerged space outside of this, though in the river, acts as a kind of reservoir, where eddies the surplus water until taken up by the current. And it always happens, where the channel takes one bend of the bed, a corresponding tongue of shallow water faces the indenture. Where the river, by some inexplicable cause, has been thrown from its regular channel, or its volume of water embarrassed by some difficulties along the banks, the effect is immediately perceived upon the neighboring bank. The column of water thus impinged against it at once acts upon the bank, and, singularly enough, exerts its strongest abrasive action at the bottom, undermining the bank, which soon gives way, and instead of toppling forward, it noiselessly slides beneath the water and disappears. Acres of land have thus been carried away in an incredibly short time, and without the slightest disruption of the serene flow of the mighty current.

This carrying away of the banks, immense as is the amount of earth thrown into the waters of the river, has no sensible effect in blocking or directing the current, though it imperceptibly raises the channel. The force of the water does not permit its entire settlement in quantities at any one place, but distributes it along the bottom and shores below. Were this not the case, it is easily to be seen,

the abrasion of the river banks would be greatly increased, and the destruction of the bordering lands immense.

A singular feature resulting from the above may here be mentioned. By pursuing the course of the river, a short distance below, on the opposite bank, it will be seen that a large quantity of the earth introduced into the current by the falling of the banks, has been thrown up in large masses, forming new land, which, in a few seasons, becomes arable. That which is not thus deposited, as already stated, is transported below, dropping here and there on the way, until what is left reaches the Gulf, and is precipitated upon the 'bars' and 'delta,' at the mouth. It not unfrequently happens that planters along the river find themselves suddenly deprived of some of their acres, while one almost opposite finds himself as unexpectedly blessed with a bountiful increase of his domain.

From causes almost similar to those given to explain the sudden and disastrous changes of the channel of the river, are also produced those singular shortenings, known as 'cut-offs,' which are so frequently met with on the Mississippi. At a certain point the force of the current is turned out of its path and impinged against a neck of land, that has, after years of resistance, been worn down to an exceedingly small breadth. Possibly the river has merely worn an arm in its side, leaving an extensive bulge standing out in the river, and connected with the mainland by an isthmus. The river striking in this arm, and not having sufficient scope to rebound toward the other bank, is thrown into a rotary motion, forming almost a whirlpool. The action of this motion upon the banks soon reduces the connecting neck, which separates and blocks the waters, until, at last, no longer able to cope with the great weight resting against it, it gives way, and the river divides itself between this new and the old channel.

Nor do these remarkable instances of abrasive action constitute the entire washing from the banks. The whole length of the river is subject to a continual deposit and taking up of the silt, according to the buoyant capacity of the water. This, too, is so well regulated that the quantity of earthy matter held in solution is very nearly the same, being proportioned to the force of the current. For instance, if the river receive more earth than it can sustain, the surplus sediment drops upon the bottom or is forced up upon the sides. If the river be subject to a rise, a proportionate quantity of the dropped sediment is again taken up, and carried along or deposited again, according to the capacity of the water. By this means a well-established average of silt is at all times found buoyant in the river.

Having briefly examined the sedimentary character of the Mississippi, some investigations as to the proportion of sediment to water may be of interest. And it is well to state here that a mean stage of flow is taken as the basis upon which to start the experiments. The experiments and analysis of the water were made by Professor Riddell, at intervals of three days, from May 21st to August 13, 1846, and reported to the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists.

The water was taken in a pail from the river in front of the city of New Orleans, where the current is rather swift. That portion of the river contains a fair average of sedimentary matter, and it is sufficiently distant from the *embouchure* of the last principal tributary to allow its water to mix well with that of the Mississippi.

> 'The temperature,' says the Professor, 'was observed at the time, and the height of the river determined. Some minutes after, the pail of water was agitated, and two samples of one pint each measured out. The measure graduated by weighing at 60 degrees Fahrenheit 7,295.581 grains of distilled water. After standing a day or two, the matter mechanically suspended would subside to the bottom. Nearly two thirds of the clear supernatant liquid was next decanted, while the remaining water, along with the sediment, was in each instance poured upon a double filter, the two parts of which had previously been agitated, to be of equal weight. The filters were numbered and laid aside, and ultimately dried in the sunshine, under like circumstances, in two parcels, one embracing the experiments from May 22 to July 15, the other from July 17 to August 13. The difference in weight between the two parts of each double

filter was then carefully ascertained, and as to the inner filter alone the sediment was attached, its excess of weight indicated the amount of sediment.'

As the table may be interesting, showing the height and temperature of the water as well as the result of the experiments at the different times, we introduce it complete:

**Table** ***showing the Quantity of Sediment contained in the Water of the Mississippi River***

| Date of Experiment. 1846. | | Height of River above Low Water. ft. | in. | Temperature. ° | Grains of Sediment in a Pint of Water. A. | B. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May | 21 | 10 | 11 | 72 | 6.66 | 7.00 |
| " | 25 | 10 | 11 | 73 | 9.08 | 9.12 |
| " | 27 | 10 | 10 | 78 | 7.80 | 9.00 |
| " | 29 | 11 | 0 | 74 | 7.30 | 8.10 |
| June | 2 | 11 | 1 | 75 | 4.80 | 5.45 |
| " | 4 | 11 | 1 | 75 | 7.87 | 6.10 |
| " | 6 | 11 | 4 | 75 | 4.60 | 4.90 |
| " | 8 | 11 | 4 | 75.5 | 5.48 | 5.60 |
| " | 10 | 10 | 4 | 76 | 6.70 | 6.80 |
| " | 12 | 10 | 8 | 76 | 6.50 | 6.30 |
| " | 14 | 10 | 5 | 76.5 | 6.00 | 6.00 |
| " | 16 | 10 | 4 | 76.5 | 6.47 | 6.15 |
| " | 20 | 10 | 4 | 77 | 7.08 | 7.40 |
| " | 22 | 10 | 2 | 77 | 9.88 | 9.00 |
| " | 24 | 9 | 8 | 77 | 8.40 | 8.48 |
| " | 26 | 8 | 9 | 77.5 | 8.25 | 8.78 |
| " | 28 | 8 | 0 | 79 | 9.10 | 9.58 |
| July | 1 | 7 | 2 | 79.5 | 9.15 | 9.25 |
| " | 3 | 7 | 2 | 79.5 | 9.63 | 10.00 |
| " | 6 | 6 | 2 | 81 | 8.20 | 7.57 |
| " | 8 | 6 | 0 | 81 | 7.30 | 6.96 |
| " | 10 | 6 | 1 | 81 | 6.12 | 6.28 |
| " | 13 | 5 | 9 | 82 | 7.72 | 7.30 |
| " | 15 | 5 | 10 | 82 | 6.67 | 6.60 |
| " | 17 | 5 | 10 | 82 | 4.45 | 4.57 |
| " | 20 | 5 | 4 | 82 | 6.07 | 5.75 |
| " | 24 | 3 | 10 | 84 | 5.76 | 5.72 |
| " | 27 | 3 | 1 | 84 | 4.77 | 4.60 |
| " | 29 | 3 | 11 | 84.5 | 4.28 | 4.13 |
| Aug | 1 | 2 | 6 | 85 | 4.40 | 4.44 |
| " | 3 | 2 | 0 | 84 | 3.18 | 3.34 |
| " | 5 | 1 | 9 | 83 | 3.56 | 3.40 |
| " | 7 | 1 | 5 | 83 | 2.85 | 2.85 |
| " | 10 | 1 | 6 | 83 | 3.03 | 2.92 |
| " | 13 | 2 | 8 | 84 | 2.97 | 3.00 |

The mean average of column A. is 6.32.

The mean average of column B. is 6.30.

Transcriber's Note: Data in the above table is as in the original.

'By comparison with distilled water,' says the same, 'the specific gravity of the filtered river water we found to be 1.823; pint of such water at 60° weighs 7,297.40.' Engineer Forehay says the sediment is 1 to 1,800 by weight, or 1 in 3,000 by volume.

Professor Riddell also comes to the following conclusions, after an analytic investigation of the sediment. He took one hundred grains from the river margin, dried it at 212° Fahrenheit, before weighing, and found it to contain:

| | ***Grains.*** |
|---|---|
| Silica, | 74.15 |
| Alumina, | 9.14 |
| Oxide of iron, | 4.56 |
| Lime, | 2.08 |
| Magnesia, | 1.52 |
| Manganese, | 0.04 |
| Potassa, | not determined |
| Soda, | not determined |
| Phosphoric acid, | 0.44 |
| Sulphuric acid, | 0.07 |
| Carbonic acid, | 0.74 |
| Chlorine, | 0.01 |
| Water, | 3.12 |
| Organic matter, | 3.10 |
| Total, | 98.97 |

The existence of so large a quantity of sediment in the water of the Mississippi, leads to divers formations in its bed. These formations are principally 'bars' and 'battures.' The banks are also much affected.

When the water of the river, aided by the current, has attained its full capacity of buoyant earth, as we have already said, the excess falls to the bottom. Instead, however, of remaining permanently where it first lodged, which would soon fill up the channel and cause the river to overflow, the scouring of the water on the bottom forces a large portion along with the current, though it be not suspended. Pursuing its course for a while, some irregularity or obstruction falls in the way—a sunken log, perhaps. This obstacle checks the progress of the moving earth—it accumulates; the next wave brings down more—the accumulation becomes greater; until, in the course of a few years, there is a vast field of deposit, and a 'bar' is formed. These 'bars' often divert the channel, and occasion the immense washings before alluded to.

Bars are generally found close to the banks, though there are examples in which they extend in a transverse direction to the current. Bars of this kind very much embarrass and endanger navigation in low water. At Helena, Arkansas, there is an instance of a transverse bar, upon which, in October, the water is less than six feet. These bars are formed of sand, which seems to have been the heavier and less buoyant of the components of the earth thrown into the current by abrasion, the lighter portions having been separated by the water and carried off.

It will not be necessary to consider further the subject of bars in the river, but those at its mouth deserve some attention. The subject is one that has led to much theorizing, study, and fear—the latter particularly, from an ill-founded supposition that they threaten to cut off navigation into the Gulf.

Near its entrance into the Gulf, the Mississippi distributes its waters through five outlets, termed passes, and consequently has as many mouths. These are termed Pass à l'Outre, Northeast, Southeast, South, and Southwest. They differ in length, ranging from three to nine miles. They also all afford sufficient depth of water for commercial purposes, except at their mouths, which are obstructed by bars. The depth of water upon one of these is sufficient to pass large vessels; a second, vessels of less size; and the rest are not navigable at all, as regards sea-going vessels. These bars, too, are continually changing, according to the winds or the currents of the river. It is a rather singular fact that when one of the navigable passes becomes blocked, the river is certain to force a channel of navigable depth through one of the others, previously not in use; so that at no one time are all the passes closed.

In looking into the past, and noticing the changes, it is recorded that in 1720, of all the passes the South Pass was the only one navigable. In 1730, there was a depth of from twelve to fifteen feet, according to the winds, and at another time even seventeen feet was known. In 1804, upon the statement of Major Stoddard, written at that date, the East Pass, called the Balize, had then about seventeen feet of water on the bar, and was the one usually navigated. The South Pass was formerly of equal depth, but was then gradually filling up. (This pass, at present, 1864, is not at all navigated.) The Southwest Pass had from eleven to twelve feet of water. The Northeast and Southeast Passes were traversed only by small craft. Since 1830 the Southwest Pass has been gaining depth. This and Pass à l'Outre are now the only two out of the five of sufficient depth to admit the crossing of the larger class of vessels. The former, however, is the one in most general use. All the other passes, with the exception of the two mentioned, have been abandoned.

In regard to the changes and numerous singular formations at the mouths of the Mississippi, we give a statement made by William Talbot, for twenty-five years a resident of the Balize. He says:

> 'The bars at the various passes change very often. The channel sometimes changes two and three times in a season. Occasionally one gale of wind will change the channel. The bars make to the seaward every year. The Southwest Pass is now the main outlet used. It has been so only for three years, as at that time there was as much water in the Northeast Pass as in it. The Southeast Pass was the main ship channel twenty years ago; there is only about six feet of water in that pass now; and where it was deepest then, there are only a few inches of water at this time. The visible shores of the river have made out into the Gulf two or three miles within my memory. Besides the deposits of mud and sand, which form the bars, there frequently rise up bumps, or mounds, near the channel, which divert its course. These bumps are supposed to be the production of salt springs, and sometimes are formed in a very few days. They sometimes rise four or five feet above the surface of the water.' He 'knew one instance when some bricks, that were thrown overboard from a vessel outside the bar, in three fathoms of water, were raised above the surface by one of these banks, and were taken to the Balize, and used in building chimneys. In another instance, an anchor, which was lost from a vessel, was lifted out of the water, so that it was taken ashore. About twenty years ago, a sloop, used as a lighter, was lost

> outside the bar in a gale of wind; several years afterward she was raised by one of these strange formations, and her cargo was taken out of her.'

We may say the bumps of which Mr. Talbot speaks are termed 'mud bumps,' from the fact of being composed of sediment. They present a curious spectacle as seen from a passing steamer. They are undoubtedly the result of subterranean pressure, but from what cause, whether volcanic, or the influence of the sea or river, or both, has not been determined. Many speculations have been entered into in regard to these phenomena, but as yet without fruitful result.

Leaving this digression, we proceed to notice that the theories set up to explain the causes of the bars at the mouth of the river, have been numerous and various. Some suppose them to be the result of the water of the river meeting the opposing force of the Gulf waves, checking the current, and causing a precipitation of the suspended sediment. Others are of the opinion that the bars are entirely the effect of marine action, and endeavor to show that the immense inward flow of the Gulf washes up from its bed the vast accumulations that are continually forming in the way of navigation.

After a personal observation and investigation, and as well after frequent and free consultation with others, we are persuaded to discredit the above-mentioned theories. The resistance of the Gulf does not form the bars, though it exerts an influence. The immense volume and force of water ejected from the river receives no immediate repellent action from the Gulf, but extends into it many miles without the least signs of disturbance, as may be plainly discovered even in the most casual observation. It is known as well that the water of the river remains perfectly palatable at a very close proximity to the sea. This is a very good evidence of the superior force of the river's current. The two volumes of water mix a considerable distance out at sea.

An able engineer states that, upon examination, he found a column of fresh water seven feet deep and seven thousand feet wide, and discovered salt water at eight feet below the surface. As the result of his investigations, he divides the water into three strata, as follows:

1. Fresh water, running out at the top with a velocity of three miles an hour.
2. Salt water, beneath the fresh, also running out at about the same velocity.
3. A reflex flow of salt water, running in slowly at the bottom.

It is this inward current, he thinks, that produces the deposit, and in doing so carries with it no small degree of sea drift. The influx of the lower column flowing up stream, after it passes the dead point, is allowed time and opportunity for the sediment to deposit. The principle of the reflex current is somewhat that of an eddy, not only produced by the conflict of two opposing bodies of water, but also is much influenced in the under currents by the multitude of estuaries presented by the irregular sea front of the coast.

A gentleman, who seems to have taken a very statistical view of these bars, makes the following business-like and curious calculation as to their immensity: we introduce it on account of its originality. He says the average quantity of water discharged per second is five hundred and ten thousand cubic feet. The quantity of salt suspended, one in three thousand by volume. The quantity of mud discharged, one hundred and seventy cubic feet per second. Considering seventeen cubic feet equal to one ton, the daily discharge of mud is eight hundred and sixty-four thousand tons, and would require a fleet of seventeen hundred and twenty-eight ships, of five hundred tons each, to transport the average daily discharge. And to lift this immense quantity of matter, it would require about seven hundred and seventy-one dredging machines, sixteen horse power, with a capacity of labor amounting to one hundred and forty tons, working eight hours.

Another class of sedimentary formations met with along the banks of the Mississippi are the battures. There is one remarkable instance of these in front of New Orleans, which has led to much private dispute, and even public disturbance, as to ownership. Within sixty years, in front of the Second Municipality of the city, the amount of alluvial formations susceptible of private ownership were worth over five millions of dollars, that is, nearly one hundred thousand dollars per annum, and the causes which have produced them are still at work, and will probably remain so. As far back as

1847 these remarks were made upon the subject: 'The value of the annual alluvial deposits in front of the Second Municipality now is not less than two hundred thousand dollars, and, with the exception of the batture between the Faubourg St. Mary line and Lacourse street, all belongs to this municipality.' 'Such a source of wealth was never possessed by any city before. In truth, it may be said that nature is our taxgatherer, levying by her immutable laws tribute from the banks of rivers and from the summits of mountains thousands of miles distant to enrich, improve, and adorn our favored city.' There are numerous other examples of the kind going on elsewhere along the river.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.