

Jack in the gold-mines of the Rand. Little more than a hundred years ago, the Tories supported the traffic in human flesh because from it flowed half the wealth of Liverpool, owing to the vast and long-continued monopoly in slave-dealing which had been won by the victories of Marlborough. To-day they stand for a big monopoly of slave-importation, in the interests of a knot of hook-beaked capitalists with mostly German names. But the slave-traffic, and (in 1807) slavery itself were abolished by what we may by anticipation call a Liberal Ministry, in the teeth of stubborn opposition by Tory obscurantists and their capitalist friends. History seems about to repeat itself in this year of grace 1906. Another Liberal Administration is—again in the face of Tory opposition—sounding the death-knell of slavery in the Rand. 'If,' said Sir H. C. Campbell-Bannerman a few days ago, 'a representative Legislature desires Chinese in South Africa, we do not desire to meddle, but Chinese labor under conditions bearing a taint of servitude cannot be tolerated within the King's dominions. The Balfour Government must bear the responsibility of that villainous system. It is too bad to denounce the present Government, even if it has blundered in trying to get rid of the evil.'

Cowper sang, though somewhat in advance of events, the song of liberation:—

'Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.'

In the outlying members of the Empire freedom came later to the slave. On August 28, 1833, King William IV. affixed his signature to a Bill for the emancipation of all slaves throughout the British colonies. The Act came into force on August 1, 1834. That was the new year's day of year one of negro freedom in the outskirts of the Empire. It was a splendid piece of philanthropy, and cheap at the £20,000,000 in minted sovereigns which it took to satisfy the claims of the slave-owners. Years afterwards, Great Britain risked war with the United States rather than give up the fugitive slave Anderson, who had killed one of his pursuers and escaped to Canadian soil. Yet, a short time afterwards, when the great American Civil War broke out, English statesmen, clergymen, journalists, and the vast mass of 'the classes' in Great Britain were, strangely enough, enthusiastic supporters of the slave-holding South against the Abolitionist North. It was a passing lapse from grace. The legalising of serfdom under the flag in South Africa is another. The fording millionaires on the Rand and their English confreres want to fob more millions—at shent. per shent. The cheaper the labor the bigger their profits. British workers are fastidious enough to wish to live like human beings—as they did in the days of Oom Paul. Even Kaffir labor is too dear to suit the purses of the Rand millionaires. So, hey! for Chinese cheap labor; and ho! for the slant-eyed pagan chattels from the slums of the Distant East, that are content to live on rice and tubers, and to pig together in sweltering prison-pens called compounds. The hard-fisted monopolists of the Transvaal are shaking in the face of the British public the bogey of vanishing dividends. So did the Liverpool slavers more than a century ago. But in the one case as in the other the bogey was only a limp old rag doll, with most of the sawdust knocked out of it. Liverpool survived the abolition of the slave-traffic. The Transvaal will outlive the deportation of its last pig-tailed serf. Against the coming reform, the nabobs of the Rand are puffing like a fumarole. But humanity will sing a *Te Deum* over the final passing of, serfdom from its last great stronghold in the Empire. It was abolished by the Church in England in the old Catholic days. The Reformation revived it. It is high time for the public executioner to get his slip-knot around the neck of the 'villainous system' of servitude now in force in the Transvaal mines.

Excommunication

The Catholic Church sails on an even keel. She has not one law for broadcloth dress-coats and Worth costumes, and another for moleskins and Paisley shawls. She, for example, impartially excommunicates every Catholic divorced person who attempts a second marriage while his or her spouse is living. This was the folly that was recently perpetrated by a millionaire woman in Bishop Scannell's diocese of Omaha, in the United States. The Church's sentence of excommunication reached her through her rampart of bulging money-bags as easily and as surely as it touches tandem bigamists at the other end of the social scale through their pathetic rags. It fell likewise upon one or two Catholics of paralytic spine who took part as witnesses in what their faith teaches them is an act of legalised bigamy. A clamor went up from the plutocrats and their friends. Some spaniel journals yapped in tune with them. So far as we can discover an articulate voice amidst the swelling clangor, it seems to be contended that it is time for a bishop who administers an excommunication to a leader—and especially a millionaire leader—of 'sassiety' to take lodgings in a tree; that such a sentence is part of the ancient armory of the Church of Rome only; and that it is as unknown among the Reformed creeds as are the arquebuse and the blunderbuss upon the modern field of battle.

A North Island contemporary seems to make some such views as these its own. But the views are none the saner, nor the statements as to fact any truer, on that account. For some people are born with a gift for riding rough-shod over truth and tumbling head-foremost into fallacies—like the top-heavy knight of the wooden sword that was such a tribulation to little Alice in Wonderland. Now, as is well known, every grade of society has its own little code of excommunication. Of course they do not call it excommunication. But that is precisely what it comes to, for each petty 'set' or coterie rigidly ostracises from its social intercourse or inter-communion any of its members whose company has become, from any cause, undesirable. Every secret society, every social club, every benefit organisation, every college and school, claims, and on occasion exercises, the right of excommunication—that is, of expelling members from union with it and from participation in its benefits. In every civilised country the law excommunicates, or segregates from the ordinary daily life of the community, many evil-doers whose conduct is deemed to be inimical to its well-being. Some of these are excommunicated from the social life of the community for a period, during which they are placed under lock and key in gaol. Others are permanently segregated, by life-long imprisonment, or by the hangman's noose, or the guillotine, or the electric chair. Some of the early 'Reformers' excommunicated each other in language that was painful and frequent and free. Luther, for instance, excommunicated Osiander as 'a devil, incarnate.' Osiander retorted in kind. The leaders of one of the two rival Reformed sects in Magdeburg publicly excommunicated 'en bloc' every soul among his opponents. 'I cut them off,' said he, 'as stinking, corrupt members from the community of Christ; I close the door of heaven against them, and throw open the gates of hell, and I consign them to the devil himself to be plagued and tormented for ever.' The ancient and apostolic weapon of excommunication is by no means obsolete among our separated brethren at the present day. But they use it more rarely and with more dignity and discretion than did their spiritual forbears of the sixteenth century. The 'Saturday Review' of May 21, 1898, and 'Reynolds's Newspaper' of May 22, 1898, record, for instance, the infliction of the major (or greater) excommunication upon a clergyman who had been found guilty of serious crimes. The sentence was passed with great solemnity by the Anglican Bishop of Lichfield in his cathedral. The offender (according to

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