

If You Would Address

BY CHARLES HENRY WEBB

ADDRESS me not where but till light
I halt my camel for the night;
Where on the desert, sand-storm swept,
Unsheltered from the blast I slept.

Beyond, a golden city waits,
And nearer swing the distant gates,
Inside of which are rest and calm
And crystal springs and groves of palm.

As o'er the worn and dusty road
My patient camel on I goad,
We sometimes see oases green—
But wastes of desert lie between.

The well at which I kneel to drink
My parched lips mocks with bitter brink;
The tree beneath whose shade I'd lie
Is leafless, and its boughs are dry.

Sometimes fair cities seem to rise
With minarets that pierce the skies;
I urge my camel on with blows—
They sink in sand from which they rose.

But these white walls that now I see
Mirage and mockery cannot be—
Upon the air a music swells
That drowns the sound of camel bells.

Hunger and Thirst, what are ye now?
I see the palm-tree's laden bough;
I hear cool fountains splash inside
The gates that open swing and wide—

Quite wide enough for me—and too,
I think, to let my camel through. . . .
Though still outside the gates I plod,
Address me, "Pilgrim—care of God."

The Scope of Modern Love

BY HENRY T. FINCK

PESSIMISM—the disposition to exaggerate the evil in the world—is not a modern invention, since it has always been customary to speak of the “good old times.” Schopenhauer made it fashionable for a while, but in truth there is less reason for such dependency now than there was at any other time, in view of the great progress that has been made in suppressing or mitigating cruelty and vice. Even war has become less inhuman.

No one gainsays that there has been within the last few centuries a remarkable expansion of our charitable or humanitarian sympathies. What it is still the fashion to deny, however, is that there has been a corresponding growth of our domestic virtues and affections since primitive times and conditions. So far as maternal love is concerned, there seems at first sight to be some ground for this exception, since we read in the books of explorers and missionaries of mothers, among the lowest savages, risking life to save a babe from a lion’s jaws, and treating their children in camp with tender care and fond indulgence. In reality, however, what prompts a Bushman mother to face a lion is not an ethical virtue, but an irresistible, instinctive impulse, which she shares with the most timid and irresponsible animal mother. It is indeed altruism—action for another’s benefit—but not the conscious, voluntary altruism which alone deserves the name of affection. As if realizing that such conscious, deliberate, altruistic affection cannot be looked for in these lower grades of mankind, nature (natural selection) has, moreover, made the fondness which a mother lavishes on her babe when she suckles and caresses it both a necessity which it is painful to suppress and a *pleasure to herself*—the deepest and intensest pleasure, indeed, that she is capable of. While this fondness is, therefore, pleasant to see,

it cannot be accepted as evidence of altruistic affection.

The gulf which separates such primitive, instinctive, selfish fondness from full-fledged modern maternal affection is revealed when we observe the actions of savage mothers more closely. In Fison and Howitt’s book on Australia we read that “the aboriginal mind does not seem to perceive the horrid idea of leaving an unfortunate babe to die miserably in a deserted camp.” The average number of children born to an Australian mother used to be six, but of these, as a rule, all but two were murdered by their own parents. In the South Sea Islands not less than two-thirds of the children were killed in the same way. It has been suggested, in extenuation of such heartless, unmotherly conduct, that the hardships of savage life account for these infanticides; but this is a poor apology. Eyre testifies expressly that Australian mothers killed their babes “solely to get rid of the trouble of rearing” them; and concerning the Fijians, Williams says that their motives were “whim, expediency, anger, or indolence.”

Surely our mothers have outgrown this stage in the evolution of maternal affection! In the matter of permanence, too, there has been a great growth in parental affection. What Agassiz said of the Brazilian Indians is true of the lower races in general: “Though the mothers are very fond of their babies, they seem comparatively indifferent to them as they grow up.” “When childhood is past,” wrote Burton of the East Africans, “the father and son become natural enemies, after the manner of wild beasts.” Parental indifference is manifested especially in the heartless way in which girls are given in marriage without consulting their preferences. An Australian father’s sole object in giving his daughter in marriage is to get in exchange for her a new girl-