"Moses," A Lecture

by **Henry George**

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Notes on Henry George

Born in Philadelphia, Pa., September 2, 1839. Father a publisher of religious books. Left home at sixteen to sail as foremast boy to Calcutta. Moved to California in 1859, settling in San Francisco. Married Annie Corsina Fox. Victim of depression of the Seventies and often unable to find work. Learned printing trade and began to write articles on social problems in spare time. Got job as editor of a local paper. Gained national attention when his article on Chinese immigration was published in *New York Tribune*. The question, why poverty exists in the midst of abundance tormented him. Assigned to New York in 1868, he was confronted with the monstrous wealth of that city, side by side with debasing want. This convinced him that an economic relationship existed between these two extremes. Returned to California and wrote "Our Land and Land Policy," and then his master work, "Progress and Poverty," which was an international success. Moved to New York and wrote other books including a book on free trade. Ran twice for mayor of New York. A coalition of the major political parties defeated his first attempt. Died October 29, 1897 before the second election was held. His funeral occasioned one of the greatest outpourings of popular feeling and respect ever given to a private citizen.

"MOSES," A LECTURE

By HENRY GEORGE

THERE is in modern thought a tendency to look upon the prominent characters of history as resultants rather than as initiatory forces. As in an earlier stage the irresistible disposition is to personification, so now it is to reverse this process, and to resolve into myths mighty figures long enshrined by tradition.

Yet if we try to trace to their sources movements whose perpetuated impulses eddy and play in the currents of our times, we at last reach the individual. It is true that "institutions make men," but it is also true that "in the beginnings men make institutions."

In a well-known passage Macaulay has described the impression made upon the imagination by the antiquity of that church, which, surviving dynasties and empires, carries the mind back to a time when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon and comelopard and tiger bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. But there still exist among us observances—transmitted in unbroken succession from father to son—that go back to a yet more remote past. Each recurring year brings a day on which, in every land, there are men who, gathering about them their families, and attired as if for a journey, eat with solemnity a hurried meal. Before the walls of Rome were traced, before Homer sang, this feast was kept, and the event to which it points was even then centuries old.

That event signals the entrance upon the historic stage of a people on many accounts remarkable—a people who, though they never founded a great empire nor built a great metropolis, have exercised upon a large portion of mankind an influence, widespread, potent, and continuous; a people who have for nearly two thousand years been without country or organized nationality, yet have preserved their identity and faith through all vicissitudes of time and fortune—who have been overthrown, crushed, scattered; who have been ground, as it were, to very dust, and flung to the four winds of heaven; yet who, though thrones have fallen, and empires have perished, and creeds have changed, and living tongues have become dead, still exist with a vitality seemingly unimpaired

—a people who unite the strangest contradictions; whose annals now blaze with glory, now sound the depths of shame and woe.

The advent of such a people marks an epoch in the history of the world. But it is not of that advent so much as of the central and colossal figure around which its traditions cluster that I propose to speak.

Three great religions place the leader of the Exodus upon the highest plane they allot to man. To Christendom and to Islam, as well as to Judaism, Moses is the mouthpiece and lawgiver of the Most High; the medium, clothed with supernatural powers, through which the Divine Will has spoken. Yet this very exaltation, by raising him above comparison, may prevent the real grandeur of the man from being seen. It is amid his brethren that Saul stands taller and fairer.

On the other hand, the latest school of biblical criticism asserts that the books and legislation attributed to Moses are really the product of an age subsequent to that of the prophets. Yet to this Moses, looming vague and dim, of whom they can tell us almost nothing, they, too, attribute the beginning of that growth which flowered after centuries in the humanities of Jewish law, and in the sublime conception of one God, universal and eternal, the Almighty Father; and again, higher still and fairer, culminated in that guiding star of spiritual light which rested over the stable of Bethlehem in Judea.

But whether wont to look on Moses in this way or in that, it may be sometimes worth our while to take the point of view in which all shades of belief or disbelief may find common ground, and accepting the main features of Hebrew record and tradition, consider them in the light of history as we know it, and of human nature as it shows itself today. Here is a case in which sacred history may be treated as we treat profane history, without any shock to religious feeling. Nor can the keenest criticism resolve Moses into a myth. The fact of the Exodus presupposes such a leader.

To lead into freedom a people long crushed by tyranny; to discipline and order such a mighty host; to harden them into fighting men, before whom warlike tribes quailed and walled cities went down; to repress discontent and jealousy and mutiny; to combat reactions and reversions; to turn the

quick, fierce flame of enthusiasm to the service of a steady purpose, require some towering character—a character blending in highest expression the qualities of politician, patriot, philosopher, and statesman.

Such a character in rough but strong outline the tradition shows us—the union of the wisdom of the Egyptians with the unselfish devotion of the meekest of men. From first to last, in every glimpse we get, this character is consistent with itself and with the mighty work which is its monument. It is the character of a great mind, hemmed in by conditions and limitations, and working with such forces and materials as were at hand—accomplishing, yet failing. Behind grand deed a grander thought. Behind high performance the still nobler ideal.

Egypt was the mold of the Hebrew nation—the matrix, so to speak, in which a single family, or, at most, a small tribe, grew to a people as numerous as the American people at the time of the Declaration of Independence. For four centuries, according to Hebrew tradition—that is to say, for a period longer than America has been known to Europe—this growing people, coming a patriarchal family from a roving, pastoral life, had been under the dominance of a highly developed and ancient civilization — a civilization whose fixity is symbolized by monuments that rival in endurance the everlasting hills—a civilization so ancient that the Pyramids, as we know, were hoary with centuries ere Abraham looked upon them.

No matter how clearly the descendants of the kinsmen who came into Egypt at the invitation of the boy-slave became prime minister, maintained the distinction of race, and the traditions of a freer life, they must have been powerfully affected by such a civilization; and just as the Hebrews of today are Polish in Poland, German in Germany, and American in the United States, so, but far more clearly and strongly, the Hebrews of the Exodus must have been essentially Egyptians.

It is not remarkable, therefore, that the ancient Hebrew institutions show in so many points the influence of Egyptian ideas and customs. What is remarkable is the dissimilarity. To the unreflecting, nothing may seem more natural than that

a people, in turning their backs upon a land where they had been long oppressed, should discard its ideas and institutions. But the student of history, the observer of politics, knows that nothing is more unnatural. Habits of thought are even more tyrannous than habits of body. They make for the masses of men a mental atmosphere out of which they can no more rise than out of the physical atmosphere. A people long used to despotism may rebel against a tyrant; they may break his statutes and repeal his laws, cover with odium that which he loved, and honor that which he hated; but they will hasten to set up another tyrant in his place. A people used to superstition may embrace a purer faith, but it will be only to degrade it to their old ideas. A people used to persecution may flee from it, but only to persecute in their turn when they get power.

For "institutions make men." And when amid a people used to institutions of one kind, we see suddenly arise institutions of an opposite kind, we know that behind them must be that active, that initiative force—the men who in the beginnings make institutions.

This is what occurs in the Exodus. The striking differences between Egyptian and Hebrew polity are not of form but of essence. The tendency of the one is to subordination and oppression; of the other, to individual freedom. Strangest of recorded births! From out the strongest and most splendid despotism of antiquity comes the freest republic. From between the paws of the rock-hewn Sphinx rises the genius of human liberty, and the trumpets of the Exodus throb with the defiant proclamation of the rights of man.

Consider what Egypt was. The very grandeur of her monuments, that after the lapse, not of centuries but of millenniums, seem to say to us, as the Egyptian priests said to the boastful Greeks, "Ye are children!" testify to the enslavement of the people—are the enduring witnesses of a social organization that rested on the masses an immovable weight. That narrow Nile valley, the cradle of the arts and sciences, the scene, perhaps, of the greatest triumphs of the human mind, is also the scene of its most abject enslavement. In the long centuries of its spendor, its lord, secure in the possession of

irresistible temporal power, and securer still in the awful sanctions of a mystical religion, was as a god on earth, to cover whose poor carcass with a tomb befitting his state hundreds of thousands toiled away their lives. For the classes who came next to him were all the sensuous delights of a most luxurious civilization, and high intellectual pleasures which the mysteries of the temple hid from vulgar profanation. But for the millions who constituted the base of the social pyramid there was but the lash to stimulate their toil, and the worship of beasts to satisfy the yearnings of the soul. From time immemorial to the present day the lot of the Egyptian peasant has been to work and to starve that those above him might live daintily. He has never rebelled. The spirit for that was long ago crushed out of him by institutions which make him what he is. He knows but to suffer and to die.

Imagine what opportune circumstances we may, yet to organize and to carry on a movement resulting in the release of a great people from such soul-subduing tyranny, backed by an army of half a million highly trained soldiers, required a leadership of a most commanding and consummate genius. But this task, surpassingly great though it is, is not the measure of the greatness of the leader of the Exodus. It is not in the deliverance from Egypt, it is in the constructive statesmanship that laid the foundations of the Hebrew commonwealth that the superlative grandeur of that leadership looms up. As we cannot imagine the Exodus without the great leader, neither can we account for the Hebrew polity without the great statesman. Not merely intellectually great, but morally great—a statesman aglow with the unselfish patriotism that refuses to grasp a scepter or found a dynasty.

The lessons of modern history, the manifestations of human nature that we behold around us, would teach us to see in the essential divergence of the Hebrew polity from that of Egypt the impress of a master mind, even if Hebrew tradition had not testified both to the influence of such a mind, and to the constant disposition of accustomed ideas to reassert themselves in the minds of the people. Over and over again the murmurings break out; no sooner is the back of Moses turned than the cry, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" an-

nounces the setting up of the Egyptian calf; while the strength of the monarchical principle shows itself in the inauguration of a king as quickly as the far-reaching influence of the great leader is somewhat spent.

It matters not when or by whom were compiled the books popularly attributed to Moses; it matters not how much of the code there given may be the survivals of more ancient usage or the amplifications of a later age; its great features bear the stamp of a mind far in advance of people and time, of a mind that beneath effects sought for causes, of a mind that drifted not with the tide of events but aimed at a definite purpose.

The outlines that the record gives us of the character of Moses—the brief relations that wherever the Hebrew scriptures are read have hung the chambers of the imagination with vivid pictures—are in every way consistent with this idea. What we know of the life illustrates what we know of the work. What we know of the work illumines the life.

It was not an empire, such as had reached full development in Egypt or existed in rudimentary patriarchal form in the tribes around, that Moses aimed to found. Nor was it a republic where the freedom of the citizen rested on the servitude of the helot, and the individual was sacrificed to the state. It was a commonwealth based upon the individual—a commonwealth whose ideal it was that every man should sit under his own vine and fig tree with none to vex him or make him afraid; a commonwealth in which none should be condemned to ceaseless toil; in which, for even the bond slave, there should be hope; in which for even the beast of burden there should be rest. A commonwealth in which, in the absence of deep poverty, the manly virtues that spring from personal independence should harden into a national character—a commonwealth in which the family affections might knit their tendrils around each member, binding with links stronger than steel the various parts into the living whole.

It is not the protection of property, but the protection of humanity, that is the aim of the Mosaic code. Its sanctions are not directed to securing the strong in heaping up wealth so much as to preventing the weak from being crowded to

the wall. At every point it interposes its barriers to the selfish greed that, if left unchecked, will surely differentiate men into landlord and serf, capitalist and workman, millionaire and tramp, ruler and ruled. Its Sabbath day and Sabbath year secure, even to the lowliest, rest and leisure. With the blast of the jubilee trumpets the slave goes free, the debt that cannot be paid is canceled, and a re-division of the land secures again to the poorest his fair share in the bounty of the common Creator. The reaper must leave something for the gleaner; even the ox cannot be muzzled as he treadeth out the corn. Everywhere, in everything, the dominant idea is that of our homely phrase—"Live and let live!"

And the religion with which this civil policy is so closely intertwined exhibits kindred features—from the idea of the Brotherhood of Man springs the idea of the Fatherhood of God. Though the forms may resemble those of Egypt, the spirit is that which Egypt had lost. Though a hereditary priesthood is retained, the law in its fullness is announced to all the people. Though the Egyptian rite of circumcision is preserved, and Egyptian symbols reappear in all the externals of worship, the tendency to take the type for the reality is sternly repressed. It is only when we think of the bulls and the hawks, of the deified cats and sacred ichneumons of Egypt, that we realize the full meaning of the command: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image!"

And if we seek beneath form and symbol and command, the thought of which they are but the expression, we find that the great distinctive feature of the Hebrew religion, that which separates it by such a wide gulf from the religions amid which it grew up, is its utilitarianism, its recognition of divine law in human life. It asserts not a God who is confined to the far-off beginning or the vague future, who is over and above and beyond all men, but a God who in His inexorable law, is here and now; a God of the living as well as of the dead; a God of the market place as well as the temple; a God whose judgments wait not another world for execution, but whose immutable decrees will, in this life, give happiness to the people that heed them and bring misery upon the people who forget them. Amid the forms of splendid degradation in which a

once noble religion had in Egypt sunk to petrification, amid a social order in which the divine justice seemed to sleep, I AM was the truth that dawned upon Moses. And in his desert contemplation of nature's flux and reflux, the death that bounds her life, the life she brings from death, always consuming yet never consumed—I AM was the message that fell upon his inner ear.

The absence in the Mosaic books of any reference to a future life is only intelligible by the prominence into which this truth is brought. Nothing could have been more familiar to the Hebrews of the Exodus than the doctrine of immortality. The continued existence of the soul, the judgment after death, the rewards and punishments of the future state, were the constant subjects of Egyptian thought and art. But a truth may be hidden or thrown into the background by the intensity with which another truth is grasped. And the doctrine of immortality, springing as it does from the very depths of human nature, ministering to aspirations which become stronger and stronger as intellectual life rises to higher planes and the life of the affections becomes more intense, may yet become so incrusted with degrading superstitions, may be turned by craft and selfishness into such a potent instrument for enslavement, so used to justify crimes at which every natural instinct revolts, that to the earnest spirit of the social reformer it may seem like an agency of oppression to enchain the intellect and prevent true progress; a lying device with which the cunning fetter the credulous.

The belief in the immortality of the soul must have existed in strong forms among the masses of the Hebrew people. But the truth that Moses brought so prominently forward, the truth his gaze was concentrated upon, is the truth that has often been thrust aside by the doctrine of immortality, and that may, perhaps, at times, react on it in the same way. This is the truth that the actions of men bear fruit in this world, that though on the petty scale of individual life wickedness may seem to go unpunished and wrong to be rewarded, there is yet a Nemesis that with tireless feet and pitiless arm follows every national crime, and smites the children for the father's transgression; the truth that each individual must act

upon and be acted upon by the society of which he is a part, that all must in some degree suffer for the sin of each, and the life of each be dominated by the conditions imposed by all. It is the intense appreciation of this truth that gives the Mosaic institutions so practical and utilitarian a character. Their genius, if I may so speak, leaves the abstract speculations where thought so easily loses and wastes itself, or finds expression only in symbols that become finally but the basis of superstition, in order that it may concentrate attention upon the laws which determine the happiness or misery of men upon this earth. Its lessons have never tended to the essential selfishness of asceticism, which is so prominent a feature in Brahminism and Buddhism, and from which Christianity and Islamism have not been exempt. Its injunction has never been, "Leave the world to itself that you may save your own soul," but rather, "Do your duty in the world that you may be happier and the world the better." It has disdained no sanitary regulation that might secure the health of the body. Its promise has been of peace and plenty and length of days, of stalwart sons and comely daughters.

It may be that the feeling of Moses in regard to a future life was that expressed in the language of the Stoic: "It is the business of Jupiter, not mine"; or it may be that it partook of the same revulsion that shows itself in modern times, when a spirit essentially religious has been turned against the forms and expressions of religion, because these forms and expressions have been made the props and the bulwarks of tyranny, and even the name and teachings of the Carpenter's Son perverted into supports of social injustice—used to guard the pomp of Caesar and justify the greed of Dives.

Yet, however such feelings influenced Moses, I cannot think that such a soul as his, living such a life as his—feeling the exaltation of great thoughts, feeling the burden of great cares, feeling the bitterness of great disappointments—did not stretch forward to the hope beyond; did not rest and strengthen and ground itself in the confident belief that the death of the body is but the emancipation of the mind; did not feel the assurance that there is power in the universe upon which it might confidently rely, through wreck of matter and

crash of worlds. Yet the great concern of Moses was with the duty that lay plainly before him; the effort to lay the foundation of a social state in which deep poverty and degrading want should be unknown—where men released from the meaner struggles that waste human energy should have opportunity for intellectual and moral development.

Here stands out the greatness of the man. What was the wisdom and stretch of the forethought which in the desert sought to guard in advance against the dangers of a settled state, let the present speak.

In the full blaze of the nineteenth century, when every child in our schools may know as common truths things of which the Egyptian sages never dreamed; when the earth has been mapped and the stars have been weighed; when steam and electricity have been pressed into our service, and science is wresting from nature secret after secret—it is but natural to look back upon the wisdom of three thousand years ago as the man looks back upon the learning of the child.

And yet for all this wonderful increase in knowledge, for all this enormous gain of productive power, where is the country in the civilized world in which today there is not want and suffering—where the masses are not condemned to toil that gives no leisure, and all classes are not pursued by a greed of gain that makes life an ignoble struggle to get and to keep? Three thousand years of advance, and still the moan goes up: "They have made our lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service!" Three thousand years of advance! and the piteous voices of little children are in the moan.

Standing as I stand, where modern ideas have had fullest, freest development; in the newest great city of the newest great nation; by the side of that ultimate sea, where ends the westward march of the race that has circled the globe, and farthest west meets farthest east, the cool shades and sweet waters whose promise has so long lured us on seem dissolving into mocking mirage.

Over ocean wastes far wider than the Syrian desert we have sought our promised land—no narrow strip between the mountains and the sea, but a wide and virgin continent. Here,

in greater freedom, with vaster knowledge and fuller experience, we are building up a nation that leads the van of modern progress.

And yet while we prate of the rights of man there are already among us thousands and thousands who find it difficult to assert the first of natural rights—the right to earn an honest living; thousands who from time to time must accept of degrading charity or starve.

We boast of equality before the law; yet notoriously justice is deaf to the call of him who has no gold and blind to the sin of him who has.

We pride ourselves upon our common schools; yet after our boys and girls are educated we vainly ask, "What shall we do with them?" And under the shadow of our colleges, children are growing up in vice and crime, because from their homes poverty has driven all refining influence.

We pin our faith to universal suffrage; yet with all power in the hands of the people, the control of public affairs is passing into the hands of a class of professional politicians, and our governments are becoming but a means for robbery of the people.

We have prohibited hereditary distinctions, we have forbidden titles of nobility; yet there is growing up among us an aristocracy of wealth as powerful and merciless as any that ever held sway.

We progress and we progress; we girdle continents with iron roads and knit cities together with the mesh of telegraph wires; each day brings some new invention; each year marks a fresh advance—the power of production increased, and the avenues of exchange cleared and broadened. Yet the complaint of "hard times" is louder and louder, and everywhere are men harassed by care and haunted by the fear of want. With swift, steady strides and prodigious leaps, the power of human hands to satisfy human wants advances and advances, is multiplied and multiplied. Yet the struggle for mere existence is more and more intense, and human labor is becoming the cheapest of commodities. Besides glutted warehouses human beings grow faint with hunger and shiver with cold; under the shadow of churches festers the vice that is born of

want.

Trace to its roots the cause that is thus producing want in the midst of plenty, ignorance in the midst of intelligence, aristocracy in democracy, weakness in strength—that is giving to our civilization a one-sided and unstable development, and you will find it something which this Hebrew statesman three thousand years ago perceived and guarded against. Moses saw that the real cause of the enslavement of the masses of Egypt was what has everywhere produced enslavement, the possession by a class of the land upon which and from which the whole people must live. He saw that to permit in land the same unqualified private ownership that by natural right attaches to the things produced by labor, would be inevitably to separate the people into the very rich and the very poor, inevitably to enslave labor—to make the few the masters of the many, no matter what the political forms; to bring vice and degradation, no matter what the religion.

And with the foresight of the philosophic statesman who legislates not for the need of a day, but for all the future, he sought, in ways suited to his times and conditions, to guard against this error. Everywhere in the Mosaic institutions is the land treated as the gift of the Creator to His common creatures, which no one has the right to monopolize. Everywhere it is, not your estate, or your property, not the land which you bought, or the land which you conquered, but "the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"—"the land which the Lord lendeth thee." And by practical legislation, by regulations to which he gave the highest sanctions, he tried to guard against the wrong that converted ancient civilizations into despotisms—the wrong that in after centuries ate out the heart of Rome—that produced the imbruting serfdom of Poland and the gaunt misery of Ireland, the wrong that is already filling American cities with idle men, and our virgin states with tramps. He not only provided for the fair division of the land among the people, and for making it fallow and common every seventh year, but by the institution of the jubilee he provided for a redistribution of the land every fifty years, and made monopoly impossible.

I do not say that these institutions were, for their ultimate

purpose, the very best that might even then have been devised, for Moses had to work, as all great constructive statesmen have to work, with the tools that came to his hand, and upon materials as he found them. Still less do I mean to say that forms suitable for that time and people are suitable for every time and people. I ask not veneration of the form, but recognition of the spirit.

Yet how common it is to venerate the form and to deny the spirit! There are many who believe that the Mosaic institutions were literally dictated by the Almighty, yet who would denounce as irreligious and "communistic" any application of their spirit to the present day. And yet today how much we owe to these institutions! This very day the only thing that stands between our working classes and ceaseless toil is one of these Mosaic institutions. Nothing in political economy is better settled than that under conditions which now prevail the working classes would get no more for seven days' labor than they now get for six, and would find it as difficult to reduce their working hours as now.

Let the mistake of those who think that man was made for the Sabbath, rather than the Sabbath for man, be what it may; that there is one day in the week that the working man may call his own, one day in the week on which hammer is silent and loom stands idle, is due, through Christianity, to Judaism—to the code promulgated in the Sinaitic wilderness. And who that considers the waste of productive forces can doubt that modern society would be not merely richer but happier, had we received as well as the Sabbath day the grand idea of the Sabbath year, or adapting its spirit to our changed conditions, secured in another way an equivalent reduction of working hours?

It is in these characteristics of the Mosaic institutions that, as in the fragments of a Colossus, we may read the greatness of the mind whose impress they bear—of a mind in advance of its surroundings, in advance of its age; of one of those star souls that dwindle not with distance, but, glowing with the radiance of essential truth hold their light while institutions and languages and creeds change and pass.

That the thought was greater than the permanent expres-

sion it found, who can doubt? Yet from that day to this that expression has been in the world a living power.

From the free spirit of the Mosaic law sprang the intensity of family life that amid all dispersions and persecution has preserved the individuality of the Hebrew race; that love of independence that under the most adverse circumstances has characterized the Jew; that burning patriotism that flamed up in the Maccabees and bared the breasts of Jewish peasants to the serried steel of Grecian phalanx and the resistless onset of Roman legion; that stubborn courage that in exile and in torture held the Jew to his faith. It kindled that fire that has made the strains of Hebrew seers and poets phrase for us the highest exaltations of thought; that intellectual vigor that has over and over again made the dry staff bud and blossom. And passing outward from one narrow race it has exerted its power wherever the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures has been felt. It has toppled thrones and cast down hierarchies. It strengthened the Scottish Covenanter in the hour of trial, and the Puritan amid the snows of a strange land. It charged with the Ironsides at Nasby; it stood behind the low redoubt on Bunker Hill.

But it is in example as in deed that such lives are helpful. It is thus that they dignify human nature and glorify human effort, and bring to those who struggle, hope and trust. The life of Moses, like the institutions of Moses, is a protest against that blasphemous doctrine, current now as it was three thousand years ago—that blasphemous doctrine preached oft times even from Christian pulpits—that the want and suffering of the masses of mankind flow from a mysterious dispensation of Providence, which we may lament, but neither quarrel with nor alter. Let him who hugs that doctrine to himself, him to whom it seems that the squalor and brutishness with which the very centers of our civilization abound are not his affair, turn to the example of that life. For to him who will look, yet burns the bush; and to him who will hear, again comes the voice: "The people suffer, who will lead them forth?"

Adopted into the immediate family of the supreme monarch and earthly god; standing almost at the apex of the

social pyramid which had for its base those toiling millions; priest and prince in a land where prince and priest might revel in all delights—everything that life could offer to gratify the senses or engage the intellect was open to him.

What to him the wail of them who beneath the fierce sun toiled under the whips of relentless masters? Heard from granite colonnade or beneath cool linen awning, it was mellowed by distance to monotonous music. Why should he question the Sphinx of Fate, or quarrel with destinies the high gods had decreed? So had it always been, for ages and ages; so must it ever be. The beetle rends the insect, and the hawk preys on the beetle; order on order, life rises from death and carnage, and higher pleasures from lower agonies. Shall the man be better than nature? Soothing and restful flows the Nile, though underneath its placid surface finny tribes wage cruel war, and the stronger eat the weaker. Shall the gazer who would read the secrets of the stars turn because under his feet a worm may writhe?

Theirs to make bricks without straw; his a high place in the glorious procession that with gorgeous banners and glittering emblems, with clash of music and solemn chant, winds its shining way to dedicate the immortal edifice their toil has reared. Theirs the leek and the garlic, his to sit at the sumptuous feast. Why should he dwell on the irksomeness of bondage, he for whom the chariots waited, who might at will bestride the swift coursers of the Delta, or be borne on the bosom of the river with oars that beat time to songs? Did he long for the excitement of action?—there was the desert hunt, with the steeds fleeter than the antelope and lions trained like dogs. Did he crave rest and ease?—there was for him the soft swell of langorous music and the wreathed movements of dancing girls. Did he feel the stir of intellectual life?—in the arcana of the temples he was free to the lore of ages; an initiate in the select society where were discussed the most engrossing problems; a sharer in that intellectual pride that centuries after compared Greek philosophy to the babblings of children.

It was no sudden ebullition of passion that caused Moses to turn his back on all this, and to bring the strength and

knowledge acquired in a dominant caste to the life-long service of the oppressed. The forgetfulness of self manifested in the smiting of the Egyptian shines through the whole life. In institutions that molded the character of a people, in institutions that to this day make easier the lot of toiling millions, we may read the stately purpose.

Through all that tradition has given us of that life runs the same grand passion—the unselfish desire to make humanity better, happier, nobler. And the death is worthy of the life. Subordinating to the good of his people the natural disposition to found a dynasty, which in his case would have been so easy, he discards the claims of blood and calls to his place of leader the fittest man. Coming from a land where the rights of sepulchre were regarded as all important, and the preservation of the body after death was the passion of life; among a people who were even then carrying the remains of their great ancestor, Joseph, to rest with his fathers, he yet conquered the last natural yearning and withdrew from the sight and sympathy of men to die alone and unattended, lest the idolatrous feeling, always ready to break forth, should in death accord him the superstitious reverence he had refused in life.

"No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." But while the despoiled tombs of the Pharaohs mock the vanity that reared them, the name of the Hebrew who, revolting from their tyranny, strove for the elevation of his fellowmen, is yet a beacon light to the world.

Leader and servant of men! Law-giver and benefactor! Toiler toward the promised land seen only by the eye of faith! Type of the high souls who in every age have given to earth its heroes and its martyrs, whose deeds are the precious possession of the race, whose memories are its sacred heritage! With whom among the founders of empire shall we compare him?

To dispute about the inspiration of such a man were to dispute about words. From the depths of the unseen such characters must draw their strength; from fountains that flow only from the pure in heart must come their wisdom. Of something more real than matter; of something higher than

the stars; of a light that will endure when suns are dead and dark; of a purpose of which the physical universe is but a passing phase, such lives tell.

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