

# *The Pernicious Sophistry of Hypocrisy*



## *Abstract and train of thoughts*

**While every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy.**

Christian societies roll around the mire of hypocrisy, steeped in false pretence. 3

**Deceit and hypocrisy are at work for dear self's sake, in every nation as in every individual.**

Selfishness, whether it breeds ambition for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue. 4

The middle classes are honeycombed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority, religion has become a thin veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith. 4

**Our century is a boastful age, as proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.**

There are more hypocrites in a square yard of our "civilized soil" than antiquity has bred of them on all its idolatrous lands. 6

Instead of courtesy and sincerity, we have feigned politeness and falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food, and the same falsification of eatable food. 7

Sanctimonious hypocrisy has stifled genuine religious spirit, which is now regarded as madness. 8

**Suggested reading for students.**

On Black versus White Magic. 10



## While every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy.

From *The Letters of Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, with Some of the Letters of her Correspondents*. Part the first, containing her letters from an early age to the age of twenty-three. Published by Matthew Montagu, Esq., M.P., her Nephew and Executor. London: Printed for T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1809. Vol. II, p. 85.

While every vice is hid by hypocrisy, every virtue is suspected to be hypocrisy. This excuses the bad from imitating virtue, the ungenerous from rewarding it, and the suspicious from trusting it. Because credulity is a folly, suspicion is looked upon as wisdom, as if it was not as necessary a part of wisdom to know what to believe, as what to reject. Doubt should lead to enquiry, and enquiry to knowledge; but our modern sceptics think fit to remain in uncertainty, rather proud to believe less, than to know more than other people.”

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## Christian societies roll around the mire of hypocrisy, steeped in false pretence.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ANOTHER “ORTHODOX” PROSECUTION!) IV pp. 72-73.

Christian law and Christian societies in their pre-eminently Christian lands may conveniently forget in the nineteenth century that the practice of *healing by* “laying on of hands,” and the “miracles” of mesmerism lie at the very bottom, and are the very cornerstone in the foundation of their faith — as it originated during the first century. Trained in, and accustomed to, as it is, to wallow in the mire of hypocrisy and false pretences, it would be useless to try and have society admit that, were there anything like logic and consistency in the laws of its respective [74] countries, once that such a mode of healing is shown illegal, and mesmeric “miracles” proved no better than a *moonshine*, their creed, based upon such practices, would crumble down the first, like an edifice pulverized hollow by the white ants. This glaring contradiction between their profession of faith and their bitter opposition, coupled with an insurmountable prejudice to that old mode of healing — hence to Spiritualism and Theosophy — as shown by Christian Society and Christian Law are the legitimate outcome of fifteen centuries of *cant*<sup>1</sup> and hypocrisy. These facts alone, that while society finds it superlatively respectable to believe in, and accepts *theoretically* and upon blind faith that which it scoffs at and rejects when shown its possibilities *practically*; and that law — one of whose duties it is to enforce and protect its state religion — shows nevertheless the most superb contempt for, and practical disbelief in, the efficacy of that which constitutes the very basis of the “miracles”<sup>2</sup> claimed to have been worked by their Christ — would be preposterously ludicrous, were not its daily results so sad and so hurtful to humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> [Singing in a whining way, from the Latin *cantare*, to sing. Cant was at first a beggar’s whine, hence hypocritical and sanctimonious talk, typically of a moral, religious, or political nature. Cf. W.W. Skeat’s *Etymological Dictionary of English*, 1835-1912. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>2</sup> [Consult “Miracles are natural phenomena,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

## Deceit and hypocrisy are at work for dear self's sake, in every nation as in every individual.

**Selfishness, whether it breeds ambition for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue.**

*From Blavatsky Collected Writings, ("WHAT IS TRUTH?") IX pp. 36-37.*

Turn whichever way you will, and you find, from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, deceit and hypocrisy at work for dear Self's sake, in every nation as in every individual. But nations, by tacit agreement, have decided that selfish motives in politics shall be called "noble national aspiration, patriotism," *etc.*; and the citizen views it in his family circle as "domestic virtue." Nevertheless, Selfishness, whether it breeds desire for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue. We see smooth-tongued DECEIT and BRUTE FORCE — the *Jachin* and *Boaz* of every International Temple of Solomon — called Diplomacy, and we call it by its right name. Because the diplomat bows low before these two pillars of national glory and politics, and puts their masonic symbolism "in [cunning] strength shall this, my house, be established"<sup>1</sup> into daily practice; *i.e.*, gets by deceit what he cannot obtain by force — shall we applaud him? A diplomat's qualification — "dexterity or skill in securing advantages" — for one's own country at the expense of other countries, can hardly be achieved by speaking *truth*, but verily by a wily and deceitful tongue; and, therefore, *Lucifer* calls such action — a *living*, and an evident LIE. [37]

**The middle classes are honeycombed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority, religion has become a thin veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith.**

But it is not in politics alone that custom and selfishness have agreed to call deceit and lie virtue, and to reward him who lies best with public statues. Every class of Society lives on LIE, and would fall to pieces without it. Cultured, God-and-law-fearing aristocracy being as fond of the forbidden fruit as any plebeian, is forced to lie from morn to noon in order to cover what it is pleased to term its "little peccadillos," but which TRUTH regards as gross immorality. Society of the middle classes is honeycombed with false smiles, false talk, and mutual treachery. For the majority religion has become a thin tinsel veil thrown over the corpse of spiritual faith. The master goes to church to deceive his servants; the starving curate — preaching what he has ceased to believe in — hoodwinks his bishop; the bishop — his God. *Dailies*,<sup>2</sup> political and social, might adopt with advantage for their motto Georges Dandin's<sup>3</sup> immortal

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<sup>1</sup> [Cf. *Proverbs* xxiv, 3-4, NIV:

By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established;  
[And] through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.

<sup>2</sup> [Informal term for newspapers that are published every day except Sunday]

<sup>3</sup> [Principal character in Molière's comedy by that name; it is in three acts, written in prose, and was first performed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July, 1660. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

query, “Lequel de nous deux trompe-t-on ici?”<sup>1</sup> Even Science, once the anchor of the salvation of Truth, has ceased to be the temple of *naked* Fact.

Almost to a man the Scientists strive now only to force upon their colleagues and the public the acceptance of some personal hobby, of some new-fangled theory, which will shed lustre on their name and fame. A Scientist is as ready to suppress damaging evidence against a current scientific hypothesis in our times, as a missionary in heathen-land, or a preacher at home, to persuade his congregation that modern geology is a lie, and evolution but vanity and vexation of spirit.



Liar, liar, pants on fire,  
Your nose is longer than a telephone wire.

<sup>1</sup> [Which of us two deceives the other?]



## Our century is a boastful age, as proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.

From *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (Our Cycle and the Next) XI pp. 186-88.

What had the author of *Prometheus Unbound*<sup>1</sup> in his mind's eye when writing about the return of the golden days, and the new beginning of the world's great age? Has his poetical foresight carried his "Vision of the Nineteenth Century" into the "One Hundred and Nineteenth," or has that vision revealed to him in gorgeous imagery the things to come which are the things that were?

Fichte<sup>2</sup> assures us it is "a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, particularly in past ages," that "what *we shall become* is pictured by something which *we already have been*; and that what we have to obtain is represented as something which we have formerly lost." And he adds, "what Rousseau, under the name of the state of Nature, and the old poets by the title of the Golden Age, place *behind* us, lies actually *before* us."

Such is also Tennyson's idea, when he says:

Old writers push'd the happy season back —  
The more fools they — we forward: dreamers both . . . <sup>3</sup> [187]

Happy the optimist in whose heart the nightingale of hope can still sing, with all the iniquity and cold selfishness of the present age before his eyes! Our century is a boastful age, as proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.

**There are more hypocrites in a square yard of our "civilized soil" than antiquity has bred of them on all its idolatrous lands.**

Oh ye, gods, how dissembling and truly sacrilegious in the face of every truth, is this, our century, with all its boastful sanctimoniousness and cant!<sup>4</sup> Verily, "Pecksniffian"<sup>5</sup> ought to be thy name, oh, *nineteenth* of thy Christian series. For thou hast generated more hypocrites in a square yard of thy civilized soil than antiquity has bred

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<sup>1</sup> [A four-act lyrical drama by Percy Bysshe Shelley, first published in 1820. It is concerned with the torments of the Greek mythological figure Prometheus, who defies the gods and gives fire to humanity, for which he is subjected to eternal punishment and suffering at the hands of Zeus. It is inspired by the classical Prometheia, a trilogy of plays attributed to Aeschylus. Shelley's play concerns Prometheus' release from captivity, but unlike Aeschylus' version, there is no reconciliation between Prometheus and Zeus-Jupiter. Instead, Zeus is abandoned by his supportive elements and falls from power, which allows Prometheus to be released.]

Shelley's play is a closet drama, meaning it was not intended to be produced on the stage. In the tradition of Romantic poetry, Shelley wrote for the imagination, intending his play's stage to reside in the imaginations of his readers.]

<sup>2</sup> [Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 1762–1814, German philosopher who became a founding figure of the philosophical movement known as German idealism, which developed from the theoretical and ethical writings of Immanuel Kant. Recently, philosophers and scholars have begun to appreciate Fichte as an important philosopher in his own right due to his original insights into the nature of self-consciousness or self-awareness. Fichte was also the originator of thesis–antithesis–synthesis, an idea that is often erroneously attributed to Hegel. Like Descartes and Kant before him, Fichte was motivated by the problem of subjectivity and consciousness. Fichte also wrote works of political philosophy; he has a reputation as one of the fathers of German nationalism.]

<sup>3</sup> [*The Golden Year*, lines 65–66]

<sup>4</sup> [Singing in a whining way, from the Latin *cantare*, to sing. Cant was at first a beggar's whine, hence hypocritical and sanctimonious talk, typically of a moral, religious, or political nature. Cf. W.W. Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary of English*, 1835–1912. — ED. PHIL.]

<sup>5</sup> [An extreme hypocrite, after Seth Pecksniff, a character in Charles Dickens *Martin Chuzzlewit*.]

of them on all its idolatrous lands during long ages. And thy modern Pecksniff, of both sexes, is

. . . so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of falsehood that he is *moral* even in drunkenness and canting even in shame and discovery,

in the words of the author of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.<sup>1</sup>

If true, how dreadful Fichte's statement! It is terrible beyond words. Shall we then expect at some future recurring cycle to *re-become* that which "we already have been," or *that which we are now*? To obtain a glance into the future cycle we have thus but to examine the situation around us in the present day. What do we find?

**Instead of courtesy and sincerity, we have feigned politeness and falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food, and the same falsification of eatable food.**

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold, cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within. Life — a long race-course, a feverish chase, whose goal is a tower of selfish ambition, of pride, and vanity, of greed for money or honours, and in which human passions are the horsemen, and our weaker brethren the steeds. At this terrible steeplechase the prize-cup is purchased with the hearts' blood and sufferings of countless fellow-creatures, and won at the cost of spiritual self-degradation.

Who, in this century, would presume to say what he [188] thinks? It takes a brave man, nowadays, to speak the truth fearlessly, and even that at personal risk and cost. For the law forbids one saying the truth, except under compulsion, in its courts and under threat of perjury. Have lies told about you publicly and in print, and, unless you are wealthy, you are powerless to shut your calumniator's mouth; state facts, and you become a defamer; hold your tongue on some iniquity perpetrated in your presence, and your friends will hold you as a participator therein — a confederate. The expression of one's honest opinion has become impossible in this, our cycle. The just lost bill repealing the "Blasphemy Laws," is a good proof in point.

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<sup>1</sup> [The *Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* is a novel by Charles Dickens, considered the last of his picaresque novels. It was originally serialised between 1842 and 1844. While he was writing it, Dickens told a friend that he thought it was his best work, but it was one of his least popular novels. The late nineteenth century English novelist George Gissing read the novel in February 1888 "for refreshment" but felt that it showed "incomprehensible weakness of story." Like nearly all of Dickens's novels, *Martin Chuzzlewit* was first published in monthly instalments. Early sales of the monthly parts were disappointing, compared to previous works, so Dickens changed the plot to send the title character to the United States. This allowed the author to portray the United States, which he had visited in 1842, satirically, as a near-wilderness with pockets of civilisation filled with deceitful and self-promoting hucksters.

The main theme of the novel, according to Dickens's preface, is selfishness, portrayed in a satirical fashion using all the members of the Chuzzlewit family. The novel is also notable for two of Dickens' great villains, Seth Pecksniff and Jonas Chuzzlewit. It is dedicated to Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts, a friend of Dickens'.]

**Sanctimonious hypocrisy has stifled genuine religious spirit,  
which is now regarded as madness.**

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. VIII, No. 45, May 1891, pp. 177-86. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CIVILIZATION, THE DEATH OF ART AND BEAUTY) XIII pp. 186-87.

But these are only trifling signs of the time and the spread of *culture* among the middle and lower classes. Wherever the spirit of aping possesses the heart of the nation — the poor working classes — there the elements of nationality disappear and the country is on the eve of losing its individuality and all things change for the worse. What is the use of talking so loudly of “the benefits of *Christian* civilization,” of its having softened public morals, refined national customs and manners, *etc.*, *etc.*, when our modern civilization has achieved quite the reverse! Civilization has depended, for ages, says Burke,<sup>1</sup>

. . . upon two principles . . . the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion.<sup>2</sup>

And how many true *gentlemen* have we left, when compared even with the days of half-barbarous knighthood? Religion has become canting hypocrisy and the genuine religious spirit is regarded now-a-days as insanity. Civilization, it is averred, “has destroyed brigandage, established public security, elevated morality, and built railways which now honeycomb the face of the globe.” Indeed? Let us analyse seriously and impartially all these “benefits” and we shall soon find that civilization has done nothing of the kind. At best it has put a false nose on every evil of the Past, adding hypocrisy and false pretence to the natural ugliness of each. If it is true to say that it has put down in some civilized centres of Europe — near Rome, in the Bois de Boulogne or on Hampstead Heath — *banditti* and highwaymen, it is also as true that it has, thereby, destroyed robbery only as a speciality, the latter having now become a common occupation in every city great or small. The robber and cut-throat has only exchanged his dress and appearance by donning the livery of civilization — the ugly modern attire. Instead of being robbed under the vault of thick woods and the protection of darkness, people are robbed now-a-days under the electric light of saloons and the protection of trade-laws and police-regulations. As to open day-light brigandage, the *Mafia* of New Orleans and the *Mala Vita* of Sicily, with high officialdom, population, police, and jury forced to play into the hands of regularly organized bands of murderers, thieves and tyrants<sup>3</sup> in the full glare of European “culture,” show how far our civilization has succeeded in establishing public security, or Christian religion in softening the hearts of men and the ways and customs of a barbarous past. Modern Cyclopædias are very fond of expatiating upon the decadence of Rome and its *pagan* horrors. But if the latest editions of the *Dictionary of Greek and Roman*

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<sup>1</sup> [Edmund Burke, 1729–1797, Irish statesman and philosopher. He served as a member of parliament between 1766 and 1794 in the House of Commons of Great Britain with the Whig Party after moving to London in 1750. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke asserted that the revolution was destroying the fabric of good society and traditional institutions of state and society and condemned the persecution of the Catholic Church that resulted from it. This led to his becoming the leading figure within the conservative faction of the Whig Party which he dubbed the Old Whigs as opposed to the pro-French Revolution New Whigs led by Charles James Fox.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790; ¶133]

<sup>3</sup> Read the “Cut Throats’ Paradise” in the *Edinburgh Review* for April 1877, and the digest of it in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1891, “Murder as a Profession.”



*Biography*<sup>1</sup> were honest enough to make a parallel between those “monsters of depravity” of ancient civilization, Messalina and Faustina, Nero and Commodus, and modern European aristocracy, it might be found that the latter could give odds to the former — in social hypocrisy, at any rate. Between “the shameless and beastly debauchery” of an Emperor Commodus, and as beastly a depravity of more than one “Honourable,” high official representative of the people, the only difference to be found is that while Commodus was a member of all the sacerdotal colleges of Paganism, the modern debauchee may be a high member of the Evangelical Christian Churches, a distinguished and pious pupil of Moody and Sankey<sup>2</sup> and what not. It is not the Calchas of Homer, who was the type of the Calchas in the Operette *La Belle Hélène*, but the modern sacerdotal Pecksniff<sup>3</sup> and his followers.



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<sup>1</sup> [The *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, originally published in 1844 under a slightly different title, was written by many hands and edited by William Smith. The dictionary spans three volumes and 3,700 pages. It is a classic work of 19<sup>th</sup> century lexicography, and a companion to Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities and Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*. Many editions.]

<sup>2</sup> [The evangelical duo of Ira David Sankey and Dwight Lyman Moody]

<sup>3</sup> [An extreme hypocrite, after Seth Pecksniff, a character in Charles Dickens "Martin Chuzzlewit"]

<sup>4</sup> *Cincinnatus in Retirement* (1782) by James Gillray. Cincinnatus was a Roman statesman regarded as a model of civic virtue; he twice was called to assume dictatorship of Rome and each time retired to his farm (519-430 B.C.) This caricature by James Gillray lampoons Edmund Burke's support of the 1778 Relief Act, which ameliorated, to some degree, the discrimination against Catholics. Burke is caricatured as an Irish Jesuit, seated at a table eating potatoes from a pot labelled "Relick No. 1. used by St. Peter." Upon the appointment of Shelburne, following the death of Rockingham, Burke resigned from his position as Rockingham's secretary in protest. The poverty of the Irish is parodied by the potatoes. Catholicism is parodied by the pictures on the wall, the mutilated crucifix, the pot labelled as a relic of St. Peter, and the demons dancing under the table.

## Suggested reading for students.



### On Black versus White Magic.

- “A Strange Story by Bulwer-Lytton”
- “Adoration of male gods led to phallicism and black magic”
- “Akhund Abdul Ghaffur of Swat”
- “Ancient Magic in Modern Science”
- “Animated statues, trophies of the Black Art”
- “Auras of mediums and adepts”
- “Between Black and White Magic there is but a cobweb thread”
- “Black Magic is in full sway amidst mankind”
- “Black versus White Magic, the two Opposing Powers”
- “Blavatsky on the author of Phallicism”
- “Blavatsky on the malignant fever of unsound scepticism”
- “Buddhist Feminism in Ceylon”
- “Capital punishment is a relic of Jewish barbarity”
- “Christian Lectures on Buddhism”
- “Christianity has retarded the Woman’s progress”
- “Confessions of Cyprianus, the Penitent Sorcerer of Antioch”
- “Does your mind elate with self-adoration”
- “Egyptian Magic, good and bad”
- “Evil is an illusion caused by the Circle of Necessity”
- “Evil is the infernal end of the polarity of spirit-matter”
- “Exact Science versus Archaic Philosophy”
- “Frightening crying children into silence”
- “How can a Black Magician be known”
- “Hugo's La Fin de Satan (1911)”
- “Hylo-Idealism is a fig leaf for Crass Materialism”

- “Insights to the high idealism and quaint wit of Eliphas Levi”
- “Insights to the Occult Arts”
- “Instead of Black and White Magic, read selfish and unselfish motive”
- “Magic is the Occult Knowledge of Natural Law”
- “Mediumship and Adeptship are poles apart”
- “No one has the right to control the mind of another”
- “Occultism and Kabbalah are only masks to hide the sacred truth from the profane”
- “On Astral Intoxication”
- “On malevolent bewitchments and venomous magic”
- “Ormuzd and Ahriman are ever opposing powers, yet inseparable and interdependent”
- “Papal dispensation for murder and mayhem”
- “Phallicism and Phallic Worship”
- “Presentiments of what lies in the bosom of future”
- “Psychological and conjuring tricks”
- “Reflections of an ardent apostle”
- “Religious conversion means absolute perversion”
- “Selfishness is the cause of all sin and suffering”
- “Selfishness is the hallmark of fakirs, hermits, and yogins”
- “Sin by cruel acquiescence in an unworthy fashion”
- “Soul-destroying sophistry is fake wisdom”
- “Spirit and Matter are dual aspects of One Cause”
- “Spiritual progress is not aided by watching the Astral Light”
- “Teraphim are the elemental spirits of ancient divination”
- “The Arabian Nights are echoes from of Lemuria and Atlantis”
- “The Astral Light reflects images of every thought and action”
- “The Ensouled Violin”
- “The Idyll of the White Lotus”
- “The Origin of Good and Evil”
- “The Original Sin is a Jewish Invention”
- “The Pitfalls of Occult Arts and Metaphysical Healing”
- “The power of the magician is inversely related to his worldly interests”
- “The process of precipitating handwritten letters explained”

- “The Silent Brother”
  - “The spiritual blindness of anthropomorphism”
  - “The Theosophical Society’s position on hypnotism”
  - “Theological anthropomorphism is the parent of materialism”
  - “Theological malice is the root cause of Satanic Magic”
  - “Trained imagination can produce occult phenomena”
  - “True magic is the Gnosis of Pythagoras”
  - “Warning to phenomena seekers”
  - “When theological ethics speak no longer in man”
  - “Why women should avoid the Church like a plague”
  - “Yoga is a wolf in sheep’s clothing”
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