

## THE NEW SIN

THE first advertisement didn't attract much attention. It was quite unclassified, and the advertisement editors, after a single glance, immediately put it down under Theatre Engagements. It ran simply, "Look out for The New Sin: Professor Laileb's remarkable discovery: Satisfaction Guaranteed." Naturally, the public merely supposed it to be the title of a new *revue*, and—already somewhat jaded—awaited the appearance of Press notices. But the next was far more formidable, appearing in the most expensive pages of the daily Press, and in very large letters all over the underground stations: "Professor Laileb's Great Discovery. On Tuesday, September 27 (the date was about a month and a half ahead), Professor Laileb will lecture in the Albert Hall at 3 p.m. on The New Sin, recently discovered by him and now for the first time brought to the notice of the public. All seats free." The mention of free seats and the Albert Hall made it clear that the Professor had money behind him, and was a person to be reckoned with; he was also a generous advertiser, and the leading daily papers lost no time in fishing out all they could in the way of information and writing him up as a Silly Season column. The public, though gravely afraid (from the use of the word "lecture") that this particular form of transgression must be a System, needing (like the Physical Development and Memory-training Systems) stern months of self-discipline for its acquisition, nevertheless pricked up its ears, and was ready to know all about Professor Laileb that there was to be known.

This was singularly little. He was staying at the Langham, which found its gates uncomfortably thronged with enquirers, and its staff being replaced at an alarming rate by enterprising journalists in disguise. On the rare occasions when the Professor went out, he was attended by a horde of photographers, and their results figured boldly in the illustrated papers under a variety of titles, of which "Thinking out Another" and "Professor Laileb at it again" were among the least sportive. But actual information of any interesting kind was hopelessly wanting.

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Professor Laileb kept regular hours, drank only in moderation, indulged in no mysterious occupations, seemed to partake no more and no less than his neighbours in the more hackneyed imperfections of human nature. Of his origin, nothing was known, nothing revealed to interviewers. The British public, always impressed by a foreign name in matters of learning, and always ready to take the title of "Professor" on trust, without examining the details of graduation, was prepared to accept him at his own estimate. So was the Press, unless we except the *New Witness*, which was immediately in a position to give the name of the actual street in Vienna where he was born, and the actual synagogue which gave its cast to his early theological training.

On the subject of the Sin itself, the Professor was pardonably reticent. No, it was not a mere by-form or adaptation of any existing sin; it was not a matter of circumstances or of method that constituted its novelty. It was, he proudly said, as if someone had added a new colour to the rainbow. It reacted properly on all the usual tests of a sin; it was harmful to society in the long run, it gave a pleasing twinge of regret to the conscience, it definitely lowered the general moral level of its votaries. It was a purely original discovery, not a lost art unearthed from the Renaissance or any other forgotten period. And so Professor Laileb would bow the interviewer out, as mystified as ever, not failing to assure him of the high respect he entertained for the Press as an institution, and the deep conviction he had of its supreme mission as an educative influence.

But, where interest is sufficiently aroused, lack of precise knowledge makes an agreeable stimulant to speculation. Thus the *Daily Mail*, after its inevitable articles on "Sins of the Century" and "The World's Great Sinners," left the discussion to its readers, who fell upon it eagerly from a variety of standpoints. "A Britisher" wrote from Walthamstow demanding that, in the interests of our all-round supremacy, the secret should not be allowed to travel outside these islands. A certain Mr. Borthwick Stapleton, writing from Newport Pagnell, engineered a crusade against it, which only lasted three numbers. "An anxious Mother"

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tried to organize a fund for inducing Professor Laileb to keep his mouth shut. "A Sinner of Forty Years' Standing" pooh-poohed the whole story, and argued that the sin was perfectly familiar to himself, and as old as the Fall. Challenged, he professed himself disinclined to furnish any particulars. Next day, however, the Vicar of Much Boosting was almost certain that its nature had been disclosed to his grandfather by Lord Chesterfield. (This led to some rather irrelevant side-controversies on Memory, Longevity, and British Sea Power.) Somebody dreamt that he had discovered the secret, but forgotten it, and there was a full tide of letters on Occultism and Thought-transference. There were proposed Memorials to the Government in favour of the sin and against it, attacks on Professor Laileb, followed by hasty retractations, and several Deans earned a reputation for broad-mindedness by appealing to the public not to condemn him unheard.

The *Times* dealt with the matter to everybody's satisfaction in an article "from a Correspondent" on page 11. The old order—this gentleman reminded the paper's readers—yields place to the new, and civilization fulfils itself in many ways. It was not in the nature of human thought to remain stationary, and in the new order of things that was just dawning (nobody ever knows why, but it always is) it was fitting that new sin-forms should replace the old, not by superseding them, but by absorbing them and as it were crowning them with a splendid maturity. There were, and there always would be, old-fashioned people who were disturbed by the removal of old landmarks, and on this as on every other occasion tried to stem the broad current of progress. There was innovation which was innovation, and innovation which was not so much innovation as Renewal. We needed courage and enterprise to adapt ourselves to the new situation as our forefathers adapted themselves to the old. It might be that there would be stress, strain, crisis—even conflict. That would pass; whatever was valuable, whether in the new or in the old, would remain. All that was best always did come as the resultant of conflicting forces. Look at sport, for instance (for the article appeared on the 12th of August, and was headed "The Twelfth" to

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make the reader think it was about grouse-shooting). On the one side you had the instinct of self-preservation, the will to live: on the other side the ardour of the chase, blinding its votary to all else; and the result? Game for our dinner-tables, a result how little connected with the conscious motivation of either combatant! So it was with all human striving and human endeavour; we always struggled blindly for an ideal, we did not quite know what, using means that might or might not have the intended effect, and the result was always something we had never envisaged, and, if we had, would certainly not have wished to secure. People talked of the new sin as a great problem, but there was only one problem in reality, whether our generation would rise to the magnitude of the situation, and strain fearless eyes towards the ever-receding horizon. This notable document was everywhere quoted with approval, and was reprinted as a booklet (in the *Whither?* series) by the Uplift Publishing Company of New York.

The more politically-minded of our national organs were a little at sea as to the bearing of the discovery. The *Morning Post* naturally scented Bolshevism in it, and the *Herald* regarded it as the Mene Tekel of Capitalism, but, owing to the complete absence of data, it was not found easy to develop either train of thought. Thus it was the Sunday papers that chiefly spread themselves in criticism. For a time, indeed, these showed a delicacy in approaching the subject, which gave rise to comment. Some light is thrown on their hesitation by a mysterious visit to Professor Laileb from a gentleman representing "certain important interests," who (if I am rightly informed) offered him a very substantial sum down on condition of his transferring his lecture to 5 p.m. of Saturday, October 1st—an hour which would make it impossible for any report to appear in the evening papers of Saturday. He refused courteously. But no section of the Press—even the modern Press—could have succeeded in boycotting Professor Laileb; you might as well have tried to boycott a total eclipse. And when the Sunday papers did betake themselves to the theme, it will easily be imagined what scope they found in it—what symposia of public men, what personal paragraphs, what

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sermons by topical divines, what *questionnaires* to theatrical managers, raised and re-raised in every conceivable bearing the mystery of Professor Laileb and his Sin.

The weeklies tended to be unfavourable. The *Spectator*, indeed, showed some signs of hedging, and deprecated any attacks upon the innovator that should be based on mere shibboleths of sect and creed ; we were not bound (thank God !) by all the glosses which the narrow scholasticism of the Dark Ages had put upon a particular code of morals issued (probably in post-exilic times) to a nomad people of imperfect education. No, we were not to let the word " sin " frighten us. But it thought that, in the hopeless bankruptcy of contemporary ideals, it would have been far more satisfactory if Professor Laileb had devoted his very considerable researches to the discovery of a new virtue. The more progressive papers of the expensive order looked coldly on the whole business, not because it was sinful or (Heaven knows) because it was new, but because it was vulgar in the manner of its appearance and had aroused popular enthusiasm. The *British Weekly* launched out into a series of Jeremiads against the discovery, which would have given Professor Laileb grounds for a score of libel actions ; but, to the surprise of the public, he not only abstained from any such action, but quoted largely from the *British Weekly's* comment in his now quite ubiquitous advertisements ; nothing could have drawn attention in a more gratifying way to the hopeless degradation of the sin and the hopeless turpitude of its inventor. But meanwhile *John Bull* had taken up the controversy, declaring roundly that if Professor Laileb was a rogue, at least he was an honest one, and that all the mealy-mouthed Pecksniffs and Chadbands who beslobbered him with their sanctimonious Pharisaisms were prurient prudes, who were themselves privately guilty of half a dozen vices far more heinous than his. Professor Laileb was furious. He declared himself the victim of a conspiracy, demanded apologies, threatened actions : the article was calculated to damage his reputation and ruin his business. Then suddenly the thing subsided, and *John Bull* never referred to Professor Laileb again.

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Meanwhile, the public naturally talked of nothing else. Statisticians reported that more bets had been laid on this than on any other event within living memory ; the Stock Exchange, in particular, had a most popular sweepstake as to which precept in the Decalogue would prove to be most nearly infringed. Numerous enthusiasts insured themselves at Lloyds' against any possible form of disappointment on September 27th. The theatres languished, even in the provinces ; the managers complained that the public was all out for novelty, and nothing they could do would satisfy it. Even the pictures were unfrequented, since the Professor had sold his film rights to a forthcoming enterprise of his own which described itself as the New Cinema. Money was tight, for he had dropped a hint about floating, in October, a New Syndicate. Parliament congratulated itself heartily on the recess, but a by-election in a Northern constituency looked as if it might be fought on this sole issue. Both candidates tried to hedge by saying that it was not a party question, and neither side of the House had (ha!) monopoly of these things ; but before long both found themselves pledged to expel Professor Laileb from the country, to secure him a peerage, to take the chair at his meeting, to get his meeting stopped, to suppress his discovery, to promote it in every possible way, and to make sure that it was immediately taken over by the Nation. The election was finally decided in favour of a candidate who had once unsuccessfully defended in court a pawnbroker of the name of Laibach.

Ecclesiastical circles viewed the whole affair not, of course, with a personal, but with a thoroughly professional interest. The *Church Times*, with its keen eye for the latest development, led the way. It even seems to have hesitated for a moment as to the propriety of reproducing the great advertisement, but compromised in the end by printing it, and coming out in the same issue with a pulverizing leader, calculated to extirpate Professor Laileb's sin, whatever it should prove to be. It warned churchpeople against attending the Albert Hall meeting, which could not possibly do good, and might very well do harm. The Professor's doctrines were, it appeared, the logical outcome of Arch-

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bishop Cranmer's. It would do good if Dedication Festival services, occurring about that time, were specially well attended as a sort of protest. Accepting a current rumour that the Professor was a Serbian by origin, it conjectured that he had been expelled from his own country as a heresiarch, and deplored the anomalous state of things which made it impossible for Convocation to follow the example of the Serbian authorities. The clergy of the corresponding school, in their parish magazines, put down all the trouble to the weak and ineffective attitude of the Bishops; why could not the Bishops, at the eleventh hour, put themselves at the head of a great movement? But Bishops do not read parish magazines, and (to do them justice) were mostly enjoying a well-deserved holiday.

The Broad Church point of view was perhaps best represented by a thoughtful article from a well-known theologian, Canon Dives. Sin, he argued, was only an upward step in the direction of righteousness, nay, in a sense it was the unformed matter out of which righteousness itself took shape. Innocence which had never experienced and triumphed over sin was, properly speaking, no innocence at all. By parity of reasoning, the more sins you had become acquainted with and fought with, the more perfect did your innocence become. Professor Laileb, then, in giving us a wholly new sin, was giving us the opportunity of overcoming a wholly new temptation; and, since virtues differ specifically according to the sins they avoid, as temperance, humility, etc., it was plain that he had, consciously or unconsciously, provided us with a hitherto unknown virtue. Canon Dives urged his readers to attend the lecture fearlessly and acquire the new Virtue as soon as possible. What Professor Laileb would have retorted to this charge it is not easy to conjecture, but fortunately the article, being sent to the *Church Quarterly Review*, did not appear until several months after the whole excitement was over. The more old-fashioned leaders of religious thought seem to have pained the Professor a little by their neglect, but the Anglo-Israelite group made up for it by promptly announcing the imminence of the Last Judgment. Professor Laileb was variously identified with the Star Wormwood, the Locusts

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out of the pit, the First Beast, the Second Beast, the great hail, and each of the three frogs that came out of the mouth of the false prophet. All the interpreters, however, were agreed on one point—that it all showed how plain was the meaning of Scripture, if you only took it in its literal sense.

The Catholic theologians were a good deal exercised over the theoretical aspect of the question. The Dominicans maintained that, if the course of action recommended by Professor Laileb was contrary to any existing precept, divine or ecclesiastical, it was not new; if it was not, it could not properly be called a sin. "The New Sin" was therefore a contradiction in terms. But a school of moral theologians, who perhaps looked forward to new appendices and new cases of conscience, dissented from the verdict; if the sin was all its inventor said it was, there must clearly be something in it contrary to the natural law, and consequently no direct precept on the subject was necessary. Finally, it was generally agreed that the new sin was in all probability only new *quoad nos*, and only a sin *secundum quid*. But the controversy only agitated the pundits; the Catholic public in general was not going to excite itself over a single addition to the numerous existing forms of Satanism.

It was the very up-to-date religions that were more put on their mettle. The Christian Scientists said, of course, that it could not be a sin, because nothing was; it could only be an illusion. Since, however, there was every prospect that it would be a grateful illusion, many of them showed no reluctance to attend the meeting. The Spiritualists naturally had the time of their lives trying to find out from the mediums what the secret was about, but their results were somewhat disappointing. Fifty per cent of the answers were badly off the point, and the rest largely unprintable without being in the least illuminating; the only at all promising message came from automatic writing, and ran simply, "He doesn't want us to say." Nothing daunted, the Theosophists advertised a lecture on "The true significance of the New Sin"; their hall only held three hundred, and the crowds turned away from the door beat all previous records. But the lecturer did not get far. She started off by saying that the Laileb discovery, when



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properly understood, did not involve any external action, and belonged not to the sensible but to the supra-sensible plane. She just got out of the door in time, and the audience contented itself with wrecking the harmonium and two dozen chairs.

Time was now getting on, and these unprofitable speculations began to be overshadowed in people's minds by the all-important question of how to get a place in the Albert Hall. It was, of course, quite clear that Professor Laileb's audience would not be sympathetic. Nine out of every ten people you met fully intended to go, but it was a mysterious fact that they all went from purely scientific or purely professional motives. The Bar would be heavily represented, in case the New Sin should prove to be also a crime; doctors were going, in case it should throw any light on disease; dons, so as to be abreast of modern thought; schoolmasters, so as to know what attitude ought to be adopted in form; business men, to see that their daughters didn't go; their daughters, so as to show the old thing that they were not going to be kept in apron-strings; artists and literary folk of all descriptions, in the hope of deriving inspiration; actors, so as to study Professor Laileb's manner; critics, so as to hear what he had to say for himself—in a word, London had never been so broad-minded or so conscientious. The clergy, of course, simply had to go, for the sake of their congregations. Wives meant to stay at home, but with a certain chastened confidence that they would get first news from their husbands. The only galling part was the freedom of all the seats. The prices offered for reserved seats from various quarters were (if the accounts given of them are true) simply fabulous: Professor Laileb was adamant. His art, he objected, was its own reward; it should never be said of him that he had opposed the claim of the less fortunate classes to an equal share in the ripest fruits of civilization. Enough for him, he finely said, if he could contrive to leave the life of a costermonger or a window-cleaner fuller and richer than he found it.

But a terrible whisper began to get abroad. No one knows who started it; it was received everywhere with incredulity, nay, with ridicule; nobody dared to assert it

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as positive fact. Yet the whisper remained, and finally Professor Laileb was challenged to allay the suspicion. Was it true—was it thinkable, that he had omitted to reserve special seats even for the representatives of the Press? The suggestion, monstrous at any time, was in this case peculiarly out of place; for it was no common class of reporters that had undertaken the duty of transcribing the momentous speech. Some of the most prominent figures in journalism, even editors themselves, had been found willing to sacrifice their evening in the interests of the public. Was it true that the Professor had assigned no special accommodation for these? The answer came like a thunderbolt. Professor Laileb was sorry, but he did not feel it to be consistent with the dignity of his mission to reserve any seats whatever in the building, except for himself, his chairman, and three of his most valued supporters.

Too late, the Press tried to avenge itself. Not by any undignified outcry; not by attacking the fair fame of the man who had insulted it. But very gradually, very delicately, insinuations began to appear in all the papers suggesting that the Sin was not really so sinful after all. It was an ingenious novelty, no doubt; it would not commend itself, maybe, to our more strait-laced moralists, but as for being actually harmful . . . well, it was a matter of taste. The public must not build its expectations too high; the art of advertisement was one thing, ability to deliver the goods was quite another. And so the chorus of sinister imputations grew in volume, until finally the *Daily Express* broke loose, and in a virulent article, headed "The Dud Sin," challenged Professor Laileb to produce any evidence that his show was better entertainment for an evening than an ordinary music-hall. He did not lose his head; the reply was calm and dignified. He simply deposited the sum of £10,000, pledging himself to hand it over to anyone who, after September 27th, should devise a code of ethics of which the new sin would not be totally subversive.

This brought out official Nonconformity into opposition. Hitherto, the Free Churches had vaguely hoped that the threatened innovation was a matter of mere technicalities, something like divorce law reform. But now firm action

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seemed to be indicated, and the wires buzzed merrily. A good many protest meetings were held in various parts, and strong resolutions were adopted, calling on the police, the Watch Committee, and the L.C.C. to intervene; even demanding that Parliament should reassemble. The children of numerous Sunday Schools took an oath to abstain from the New Sin before they even knew what it was. Royalty was approached; several Members of Parliament wrote letters to the *Daily News*. But the agitation, if it ever had a chance, was too late in the field; the public meant to hold that meeting, if it had to go to Holland for it.

Early in the morning of Monday, September 26th, there was a fair-sized *queue* outside the Albert Hall. The police moved it on; it reassembled. By the middle of the afternoon there was a picket of horse-policemen, who kept order with difficulty. There was a thin drizzle during the night, but thousands under umbrellas held their own against it. From the dawning hours of Tuesday, traffic was out of the question. The Park Gates had to be closed at several places. All down Knightsbridge you could not see an inch of the pavement. The Langham cut off its telephone communication: it could not cope with the enquiries. The day was fine, but, as it wore on, a threatening bank of cloud rose from the West; the air was electric and overcharged. An aeroplane appeared from nowhere in particular, and gently moulted Anti-New-Sin Society pamphlets. . . .

For my account of the proceedings inside the Hall I depend, alas, on hearsay. The doors opened at one o'clock, and the building filled up like a lock in flood-time. There was a band which played ragtime airs, that seemed strangely old-fashioned and pathetic; the meeting was dissatisfied with the effect, and various irrelevant demonstrations rose from different parts of the building, "The Red Flag" mingling inharmoniously with "Round the sacred city gather." Two or three times attendants appeared on the platform, and were applauded by mistake. The cloud-bank mounted higher outside, and the sunlight paled and grew ominous.

Professor Laileb, whom no one has ever accused of dis-

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regarding the conventions, was punctual to the minute. He was short, fashionably dressed, slightly grizzled: a suspicion of side-whiskers made him seem vaguely old-fashioned; you would have put him down for a professional man rather than a research student. He looked straight in front of him, as if he took in the whole of that vast audience. His chairman, a most insignificant M.P., intoned the prescribed ritual of oratorical patter—would not keep them long—thought they all knew why they had come there—no introduction necessary—he himself as eager as anyone else to get on to business—believed in every man having a fair hearing, without committing himself beforehand to all the Professor might have to say—there, he would not detain them any longer.

The shadow of the cloud crept over the last of the windows, and Professor Laileb stood up. There was applause, but it was almost drowned in impatient Hushes.

“The pioneers of any movement,” began the Professor, “are proverbially liable to detraction. Habit, lack of initiative, the love of the rut—these factors, so powerful in deterring the individual from stepping outside the beaten path, reflect themselves, in the case of the mob, in a singular reluctance to see another set foot on the mountain-track which we have declared unsafe for our own passage. The dead-weights which clog all independent human action are the material we use for stoning the prophets. I was not unaware, when I began to institute researches into a branch of science hitherto comparatively undeveloped, that I was exposing myself in so doing to the opprobrium of small minds. I am not without experience of the fate that awaits the innovator. Indeed”—a smile of singular melancholy passed over the Professor’s features as he said this—“years ago I lost a very good position myself, simply through my dislike of always following with the herd.

“For longer time now than I care to remember, I have been strongly impressed with the absence of any scientific enquiry into a subject which interests us all so deeply and concerns us all so nearly as that of sin. Picture it to yourselves: the pursuit to which we devote more than half our lives, for which we are ready to postpone so many oppor-

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tunities of leisure and contentment, so much of our tranquillity of mind ; the factor which has so profoundly affected every development of human history ; the ideal which has been the sole inspiration of so much that is most remarkable in the recent literature of Europe—this pursuit, this factor, this ideal, is still neglected everywhere as a subject of organized research. Philosophers have filled libraries with their enquiries into the study of ethics—the problem of how to act rightly ; they have never dared to look facts in the face, and, recognizing the hopelessness of a struggle against human progress, resigned themselves to the problem of how we are to act in a manner more accurately, more fully, more deliberately wrong.

“ I will not weary you, for the present at any rate, with the history of my early struggles. Suffice it to say that I found myself, after years of endeavour, in a position to add substantially to the opportunities of mankind for developing this most characteristic side of its nature. It will be asked why I determined to choose England, to choose London, to choose this particular building and these particular circumstances, for the disclosure of my results. My reason was simple. I knew that for purposes of publicity London is the world’s best centre, and that the thing which impresses it most is a meeting of a half-scientific, half-political character such as the present. As I stand here, I feel that I am speaking through a megaphone to the civilized world.

“ I was determined to give the fruits of my study to humanity. If, in all these years, no one had hit upon my discovery by accident, it might well be that the secret, unless I revealed it, would remain for ever unguessed. It did, of course, occur to me to wonder whether my fellow-creatures were worthy of the revelation ; but the doubt did not seriously give me pause. In the case of a boy’s education, or in the testing of a confidential servant, we begin by entrusting the neophyte with business of little importance, and advance him further in proportion as he has shown faithfulness and aptitude already. Gentlemen, it seemed to me that the human race, to judge by the use it made of its existing opportunities for wrongdoing, had shown

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itself fully worthy of initiation into a higher degree. Every day I have spent in London, every observation I have made during my brief stay in your city, has fortified me in my opinion and encouraged me to carry out my decision. I studied your legal institutions, your business methods, your ambitions, your pleasures, and said to myself that London would look back on all this as an age of innocence before I had done with it. My share in the transformation might be forgotten, history might be silent about me, but generation upon generation of your descendants would live by my precept, perhaps hardly even paying me the compliment of remembering that it was wrong.

“And now, let us get to business.” The Professor’s voice, which had hitherto been of a silvery quality, admirable for its rhetorical value, rang out sharply and crisply at these words like the crack of a whip. At the same time he looked round, hostess-like, at his four supporters on the platform, and these, as by some previous arrangement, retired by a side door, leaving the Professor face to face with his audience, alone on the platform. The light in the Hall was now still more ominously pallid, and there was an occasional roll of distant thunder; everybody in the audience felt, I am told, an extraordinary sense of close contact with the distinguished forceful figure that now loomed solitary in front of them.

“As I said,” continued the Professor, “I had determined to make known my discovery to the world. I had reckoned on opposition; for reasons which I need not go into, I had nothing to fear from that. I had reckoned, I must say, on incredulity; I was gratified to find that, on this head, I had done the British public an injustice. In a word, until the moment when I came on to this platform, I thought that I had counted the cost, and was prepared to go through with it.

“It was only when I looked round on my audience that I realized something was wrong. Gentlemen, I regret to say that you are not the stuff sinners (I use the term in its higher sense) are made of. You did not come here because you wanted to do something naughty: you came here because you wanted to know about something naughty, to get twind of it and be able to talk intelligently about it before

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other people could, to make sure that it should be your wives who explained it to your neighbours' wives, and not the other way about. You would flatter yourselves with being men of the world, with no nonsense about you, broad-minded enough to understand the attitude of people who did not see eye to eye with you. You were not vicious, as I had hoped, you were just monumentally inquisitive. And there is about your inquisitiveness a quality—something I do not find it easy to define in terms—a quality which is simply revolting to me. Curiosity is the easiest of all sins to punish, for it carries with it its own worst punishment when it is ungratified. Gentlemen, the New Sin is not a mere fraud ; I could explain it to you in half a dozen sentences. But I am not going to tell you about it. I shall go back to the place I came from, and leave you to go to hell as best you may with the assistance of those dreary, hackneyed sins whose familiarity almost sickens you of them. Gentlemen, good night."

The wave of a single impulse moved over the vast audience, and swept them onwards, as if they had been drilling for it for weeks, towards the platform. They did not want any New Sin now ; they just wanted the old, conventional sin of murder. And then the storm broke, and the hall was suddenly illuminated by a brilliant lightning flash, which showed each man the face of his neighbour, drawn with insatiable hatred. And with the flash, Professor Laileb suddenly disappeared from the platform, and all enquiries (conducted, you may be sure, with the utmost thoroughness and good-will) failed to reveal any clue to his existence.

You blame the public, reader, as the Professor did, for its inquisitiveness ? Truly, curiosity is the most odious of vices. But, confess now, when you began to read this history yourself, had you not a faint hope that, before reaching the end of it, you would find out what the New Sin really was ?

RONALD A. KNOX.