THE

SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

OF

THE GIPSIES,

ESPECIALLY OF THOSE OF MIXED BLOOD, AND RESEMBLING AND LIVING LIKE OTHER PEOPLE, AS ILLUSTRATED IN LETTERS TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND THE THREE SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES,

AND

IN LETTERS, ADDRESSES AND ARTICLES SENT TO THE BRITISH PRESS AND PEOPLE GENERALLY;

EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO AMERICA

BY

JAMES SIMSON,

EDITOR OF "SIMSON'S HISTORY OF THE GIPSIES," ETC., ETC.

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men."—ACTS xvii. 26.

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EVER since entering Great Britain, about the year 1506, the Gipsies have been drawing into their body the blood of the ordinary inhabitants and conforming to their ways; and so prolific has the race been, that there cannot be less than 250,000 Gipsies of all castes, colours, characters, occupations, degrees of education, culture, and position in life, in the British Isles alone, and possibly double that number. There are many of the same race in the United States of America. Indeed, there have been Gipsies in America from nearly the first day of its settlement; for many of the race were banished to the plantations, often for very trifling offences, and sometimes merely for being by 'habit and repute Egyptians.' But as the Gipsy race leaves the tent, and rises to civilization, it hides its nationality from the rest of the world, so great is the prejudice against the name of Gipsy. In Europe and America together, there cannot be less than 4,000,000 Gipsies in existence. John Bunyan, the author of the celebrated *Pilgrim's Progress*, was one of this singular people, as will be conclusively shown in the present work. The philosophy of the existence of the Jews since the dispersion will also be discussed and established in it.

When the "wonderful story" of the Gipsies is told as it ought to be told, it constitutes a work of interest to many classes of readers, being a subject unique, distinct from, and unknown to, the rest of the human family. In the present work, the race has been treated of so fully and elaborately, in all its aspects, as in a great measure to fill and satisfy the mind, instead of being, as heretofore, little better than a myth to the understanding of the most intelligent person.

The history of the Gipsies, when thus comprehensively treated, forms a study for the most advanced and cultivated mind, as well as for the youth whose intellectual and literary character is still to be formed; and furnishes, among other things, a system of science not too abstract in its nature, and having for its subject-matter the strongest of human feelings and sympathies. The work also seeks to raise the name of Gipsy out of the dust, where it now lies; while it has a very important bearing on the conversion of the Jews, the advancement of Christianity generally, and the development of historical and moral science.

CONTENTS.

THE author of *The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies* begs to say that, on the face of it, and all through it, it is an American production, that has been boycotted in Europe, and is an appeal to the American people, with truth in every line of it. It should be easily read, as it involved on his part merely the exercise of "three of the senses—seeing, touching and hearing—and understanding what is said"; so simple is it in its nature, but still the knowledge of it, like everything else, has to be carefully acquired.

It is now for the first time submitted in America, although of its contents pp. 9–24 were sent in sheets to the British press, according to their dates; but some of these were incidentally given to a few of the American journals when sent to Europe. The addresses to the Church of England and the Scottish Churches (pp. 1–8) are now for the first time published anywhere.

He has said, at page 9,
tween the Gipsies and the 'coloured people' in the United States, excepting that the appearance of the Gipsies is difficult of detection, after they leave the tent, and frequently absolutely so as 'the blood' becomes mixed with the White," and live like other people, but keep rigidly silent on the subject of the Gipsy race or society. This reduces the subject to principles, or a system of science, that can be investigated and discussed; which is generally more interesting than if everything is common or too palpable to the eye. It consists of facts, circumstantially and logically stated, without elaborate arguments or illustrations, but depends on the instinctive or intuitive intelligence of the reader to perceive at once the truth of what is laid before him. For example; it can be said that dogs do not "count kindred," in which respect they differ from men; and it would imply the same of men if a large body of people, in Great Britain and throughout the world, of more or less of Gipsy blood, and in many positions of life, do not know who they are, and do not adhere to it.

This short production is submitted to the American people, through the American press. Should these, at their leisure, be pleased to, carefully and candidly, notice it in their pages, it could not fail to benefit, in many ways, a subject which exists everywhere, unacknowledged, and is much in need of it; and especially influence British journals to do the same; for the great difficulty with them is doubtless an unfortunate feeling of caste ("the sin which doth so easily beset us"), that "bars the way" against the advance of correct knowledge on the Gipsy question; which feeling of caste, so far as expressed or known, does not exist in America towards the subject, as treated in the present work, although no particular love is shown for the race when they move about in their primitive condition.

J. S.

NEW YORK, 1895.

INTRODUCTION.

TOWARDS the end of 1865 I published,
Sampson Low & Co.,
(pp. 575) from duplicate stereotype plates sent from New York;
and had the work published about the same time in New York,
but not under favourable auspices; notwithstanding which it was
handsomely noticed at great length by the American press,
whose reviews I still have. It was based on a Scotch MS.,
my father, Walter Simson,
tions of William Blackwood and Sir Walter Scott. I arrived in
the United States in the early part of June, 1851, nearly
years after the death of the writer of the MS.; so that,
sense of the word,
and published by me,
of *American literature*.

The English reviews,
favourable,
remarks made did not in the least apply to what was the really
important part of the subject, and gave it its main standing,
(and which even Walter Simson barely noticed), that is,
became of the Gipsies after they first appeared in Great Britain
about 1506?" Their original habits led them to be proscribed
everywhere,
with the white race,
distributed over a large surface of the white or native race,
took the place of the original tribe; and although ashamed of
it before the "ordinary natives," and keeping it rigidly secret
from them,
selves,
and feelings.

The Gipsy race is really a prepossessing one in appearance, and
amalgamates easily and finely with the native or white one,
physically improves it; and the amalgamation or mixture has
been so,crossed and re-crossed with itself and other natives,
we cannot tell the one race from the other, as explained in the
following pages.
"comes up" in the Gipsy *mental feeling*, especially through the
female line, with the peculiarity that accompanies it,
its possessor is a part of the "Gipsy tribe,"
the last drop of the original blood; but is exceedingly averse to
admit the fact to the public,
have the "blood.

In the following letters,
some ideas stated more than once.
missives to different persons, on various occasions. These
repetitions (trifling as they are) will show what was sent to the
persons addressed, and remind the reader of what should not in
itself, or otherwise,
from the same plates used in the originals,

burgh Gipsy Lore Society, which I did not stereotype, but have done now from the printed original of it.

Since the American and British reader will doubtless ask the question, "What replies did I get from the Clergymen of the Church of England and the three Scottish Presbyterian Churches?" it would be uncandid for me to refrain from saying that I did not get any. And I might say the same,
lutely,
question in my keeping,
remarks, however true, in any way unnecessarily offensive in connexion with it.

The *Perthshire Courier* (at page 11) says that I have been "'boycotted' by the Scotch Press," and the English one likewise.
"head and heart, and bowels of compassion" in treating with less than ordinary humanity others who "are born and live and die incognito," in consequence of the prejudice of caste against the name of Gipsy, and whom they meet in every-day life,
distinct from what passes,
Gipsies,
boycotting was in reality towards *American literature* as such, as applicable to people in America as well as in Europe, although in America the popular kind of Gipsies are comparatively few, contrasted with those resembling a kind of Masonic Society,
obvious to the eye,
signs and grips,
poses.

I have elsewhere said that "John Bunyan belongs to the world at large,
formation of his character." She has no right to claim him as originally an English blackguard or vagabond, degenerated from people that entered England with William the Conqueror—a fantastic pedigree—but should have had regard to what, in *Grace Abounding*, he said he was and was not; which leaves us no alternative but to say that he was an English Gipsy of mixed blood,
smith,"
blood; or a *brazier*, as in the legal definition, in 1725,
Carlyle's progenitor,
called Gipsy." Americans should certainly have something to say on this subject,
they could reasonably be looked upon as disinterested,
had the ordinary wild Gipsy comparatively lately,
brought under their notice; with none of that feeling of caste that applies to Gipsy descent as such,
that of native families, so universal in Europe; and being so practically conversant with other races that are so different from their own, of European descent or extraction.

Bunsen, in his *Egypt's Place in Universal History*, writes thus: "Incapability of believing on evidence is the last form of the intellectual imbecility of an enervated age, and the warning sign of impending decay." That led me to write in 1893 to a gentleman in Scotland,

made of?" while I said to an acquaintance,
they seemed to be "cuddies and howlets,"
means form part of a dead language, but are softer and sweeter, and less offensive, than their English equivalents.
have an apology to make me, or my memory; and they will doubtless sooner or later do it.

In almost any subject that can be thought of, the services and money of one person amount to little.
secured by the co-operation of many. "No individual by himself,"
he who unites with many,
nently so in the present case, where myself and *American literature*, as I have said,
charged Americans with being testy,
some in matters that hardly concern them; but in this case they might at least *put in a demurrer* in what, in a very important degree, concerns them,
abstract truth,
rights of humanity, relating to a race that is wonderfully mixed as regards blood, and of great tenacity, to be found everywhere, and nowhere acknowledged; and including the famous John Bunyan, who was certainly "one of it."

In 1884 I said to the British people that "What is wanted in this matter is co-operation, for it seems unreasonable that all the trouble and expense connected with such a cause should fall upon one person, who is little able to bear both of them." And in 1882,
their battles should be fought exclusively by one of themselves (and at his expense),
miles distant from them; or that they should shirk responsibilities of any kind."

I have been of the opinion since 1858 (published in 1865) that the questions at issue,
settled in America. For this Americans,
to the Scottish Churches (p.
even a "social gospel,"
on all,
hand;" and as more particularly to be found in what I have elsewhere published.

The subject has been greatly complicated and injured by indiscreet remarks by the press,
recognizing it. This may be illustrated by reference to *The Scottish People and Press and the Gipsies* (page 11, par.
The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies (page 16, par. 7),
I wrote to the *Athenæum* about it occupying "a false position on the subjects of John Bunyan and the Gipsies, or on *any* question."
In this way, as I have said,
plicated and injured,"
it up again, notwithstanding that it is a *living one*,
be a *living one*. This "illustrates how careful people should be in making assertions that may cause much evil,
in setting them aside," as I wrote in *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*, in 1881.

I have said that "as I have a good and humane question in my keeping,
however true,
with it." What I say about the *Edinburgh Scotsman*, I trust, no exception to this principle.
lent ill-will. The *History of the Gipsies* (pp. 575) was a "pretentious absurdity." Of *Contributions to Natural History and Papers on other Subjects*, he says: "The puzzle is why he should suppose that his views . . . . are of the smallest importance to any human being except himself." Of *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*, he says: "No more cruel penalty could be inflicted on the author's worst literary foe than to be condemned to read it through."

In these remarks we find neither sense nor grace nor gracefulness nor graciousness,
be expected from a countryman of my own when he blindly goes to an extreme in his ill-will.
the last page,
understand that a person of Gipsy blood is "one of the Gipsy tribe," even should he be only "touched or tarred" with Gipsy blood. On that page I said: "I had no difficulty in understanding this subject, even with having almost everything to find out; so that others should be able to do it,
explained to them." "Where there's a will there's a way"; and its converse is also true.
doubt what has been said of the Gipsies in Scotland (and elsewhere) as to deny that the sun (occasionally at least) shines in Scotland. And it would be unfortunate, even humiliating,
think that a subject so plainly set forth by me should not be intelligible or credible to British or American people, although the latter are in a much better position to interpret it to the former. And it is simply,
regard to blood,
Jews," as I wrote in my *Disquisition on the Gipsies*,

> "Without having any territory, or form of creed peculiar to itself, or any history, or any peculiar outward associations or residences, or any material difference in appearance, character or occupation," "can be a people, living among other people, and yet be distinct from those among whom they live. The distinction consists in this people having *blood*, *language* [or words], *a cast of mind and signs* peculiar to itself; the three first being the only elements which distinguish races; for religion is a secondary consideration, one religion being common to many distinct races. This principle, which is more commonly applied to people occupying different countries, is equally applicable to races, clans, families or individuals, living within the boundary of a particular country, or dwelling in the same community" (p. 457).

This,
have printed,
note to the *History of the Gipsies*, dated London, October 10th, 1865, which will throw considerable light on the subjects under discussion. I might also add that,
years,
(and other) questions,

NEW YORK, 1894. JAMES SIMSON.

The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies.

"Every scribe which is instructed . . . . bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—MATTHEW xiii. 52.

REV. SIR:—

In 1871 I addressed to the Scottish Churches a Tract entitled *The Scottish Churches and the Social Emancipation of the Gipsies*, and in 1881 I published a work entitled *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*, containing the former. In the latter I wrote as follows:—

"Having pointed out *what* I think should be done, it may be necessary to say *how* I should be gone about. Thus I send copies of this publication to the Clerks of the Presbyteries, with the request that they will circulate them among their brethren, office-bearers, hearers, and friends and acquaintances generally; and make the subject of discussion on appropriate occasions" (p. 23),

as alluded to at page 16 of the work entitled *The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies*, just published; a copy of which I send herewith to the Clerks of the Presbyteries, with a similar request.

In the Tract, which was a special appeal to the Scottish Churches, I wrote thus:—

"I have addressed this letter to you, with the hope that you will consider it a duty, a privilege, and a pleasure, to do something in the way of diffusing a knowledge and creating an opinion on the subject, and a sympathy and respect for the people described. . . . . I do not mean that you should necessarily take any public or official notice of it, but that, as a private Christian gentleman, you should do your best, among your friends and neighbours, to bring about a change of ideas and feelings, in a quiet, genial, and gradual manner, as the ruder season passes into the more gentle, and as a purely social and moral movement should be made; just as Christianity itself, in its general principles, spread its benign influences over all that came within its reach" (p. 33). I further said that "The organs of society do not seem to have noticed the subject, perhaps for the reason that they do not think the people will receive what they may say in regard to it" (p. 32).

The first official notice taken of this tribe in Scotland is found in a letter of James IV. to his uncle, the King of Denmark, in 1506, when he said that they "had lately arrived on the frontiers of our kingdom." Its history should be settled by investigation and evidence, and not by suppositions, which seem to have been followed by most of people who have alluded to the subject. That there should be great difficulties in the way of it being investigated, and the facts of it ascertained, is natural enough; but that there should be difficulties in the way of it being understood and treated with justice, after being investigated and ascertained, is surprising, for it is very simple in its nature. In that respect I said in the *Disquisition on the Gipsies*, that

"If the European will, for example, ask himself, 1stly, what is the idea which he has of a Gipsy? 2ndly, what are the feelings which he entertains for him personally? and 3dly, what must be the response of the Gipsy to the sentiments of the other? he cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that the race should 'marry among themselves,' and that, 'let them be in whatever situation of life they may, they all' should 'stick to each other'" (p. 533).

Consider for a moment that this race or blood, and every idea connected with it, became legally and socially proscribed, and that the people represented by it have never been acknowledged in any form or relation, and it should easily be believed that the race has been forced to maintain an incognito among their fellow creatures. Soon after 1506 the tribe, in "swarming from the tent," would gradually be forced by circumstances to adopt the ways of the other inhabitants; and by their blood having become mixed with the ordinary one of Scotland they

would soon come to resemble them, as in their habits they assimilated with the natives of the soil. Indeed I said in the *Disquisition* that

"We must not forget that when the Gipsies entered Scotland it was for better or for worse, just for what was to 'turn up.' Very soon after their arrival the country would become their country, as much as that of the ordinary natives; so that Scotland became their home as much as if it had always been that of their race, except their retaining a tradition of their recent arrival from some part of the East, and a singular sense of being part and parcel of 'the Egyptians that were scattered over the face of the earth'; neither of which the odious prejudice against 'the blood' allowed them to forget, assuming that they were willing and moreover that the cast of their minds allowed them to do either" (p. 471). "It is the Gipsy woman who feels the prejudice that exists towards her race the most acutely, for she has the rearing of the children, and broods more over the history of her people. As the needle turns to the pole so does the mind of the Gipsy woman to Gipsydom" (p. 408). "Do not speak of the attachment of the Jewess to her people; that of the Gipsy is greater. A Jewess passes current anywhere as a Jewess, but the Gipsy as she gets connected with a native circle, and moves about in the world, does so clandestinely, for as a Gipsy she is *incog.*; so that her attachment remains at heart with her tribe, and is all the stronger from the feelings that are peculiar to her singularly wild descent" (p. 470).

By assuming the surnames of the natives of Scotland, and mixing their blood with theirs, and conforming with their ways, and "chiming in with all the native Scotch ideas of clanism, kith, kin and consequence as regards family, descent and so forth" (*Dis.*, p. 402), they have come to resemble externally the people of Scotland so closely that the two cannot generally be distinguished by the rest of the population, or even by the tribe itself, unless the latter should be in possession of information that enables them to say, positively or circumstantially, that they "belong to the tribe." How all this came about is elaborately explained in what I have from time to time published on the subject. Passing over all the details of that explanation, we have it illustrated by the formal and s cific admission of the late Dr. Robert Gordon, of the High Church, Edinburgh, that "he himself was a Gipsy," and one of Mrs. Carlyle. Her admission, so far as it goes, is of the utmost importance, for she gives her descent as from William Baillie, the father of her hero, Matthew Baillie—"a thorough gentleman in his way"—who married Mary Yorkston; all of whom are minutely described in the *History of the Gipsies*.* These are but instances of many others in Scotland, as partially illustrated by the assertion of one of the race, viz.: "'I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family'; that is, one of this easte race that arrived so recently in Scotland, while following a tented life, and whose descendants, owing to a mixture of native blood, are now to be found of all colours";† which is thoroughly applicable to the case of John Bunyan.

Here we have a real case of "development" or "evolution," that is, a people that have lived in Scotland since 1506, resembling "ordinary Scotch" so closely that generally the two cannot outwardly be distinguished, and yet in *one* sense not Scotch, but Scotch Gipsy, or "Scoto-Egyptian." They come daily in secret contact with the ordinary natives in every relation in life; and by intermarriages (especi lly through the female line) have changed native families into Gipsy ones; and present duplicates of native "connexions," that is, furnish Gi sy Baillies, Gordons, Ruthvens, Kennedys, etc., corresponding with those that are

* Mr. Froude says of Mrs. Carlyle that "Her features were not regular, but I thought I had never seen a more interesting-looking woman. Her hair was raven black, her eyes dark, soft, sad, with dangerous light in them." But he has left out the most interesting fact connected with her, as he has ignored the one relating to John Bunyan, who doubtless spoke the Gipsy language in great purity.

† Appendix to *Reminiscences of Childhood at Inverkeithing, or Life at a Lazaretto*, p. 87.

ordinary natives of the soil. In this we have everything so natural and logical, and so illustrative of the "reign of law," that it should cause no surprise; the real surprise being that it should have been otherwise, as I have on many occasions explained.

From all this it follows that the race (however mixed in regard to blood it may have become) should be acknowledged, in theory at least, whether it presents itself for that purpose, or not; and that there should be no disparagement connected with the name or blood, or "sense of tribe," as such. The descent is certainly wild and barbarous and roguish, but that is peculiar to the descent of all original tribes; and especially of one arriving from Asia, when many of the inhabitants of Europe (and Scotland especially) were little better than "wild and barbarous and roguish" themselves.

In *The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies* I have said that "I intend to distribute the present publication pretty freely over the Continent, for the Gipsies exist in all the countries of Europe very much as they do in Scotland and Great Britain generally" (p. 16).

Owing to the popular, or what some might call the democratic, constitution or standing of the Scottish Churches, I feel induced, as an act of perfect propriety, to address them through the Clerks of the Presbyteries, as explained, with the object of reminding them of the position in which they stand towards the people in question (with whom they come in contact daily, although not aware of it), and with the hope that they will "consider it a duty, a privilege, and a pleasure, to do something in the way of diffusing a knowledge and creating an opinion on the subject, and a sympathy and respect for the people described." There seems to be a conventional difficulty in the way of the "organs of society" bringing the subject into *public* notice; but that need not apply to it being done *privately*, in the way of quiet social intercourse, with the "backing" I have furnished those whom I have formally addressed; giving them, as it were, a "social gospel" to be preached, which contains "chapter and verse" on all, or almost all, of the points referring to the subject in hand.

As the subject of the Gipsies, in all its bearings, will fall, sooner or later, to the province of the Church, it is to be hoped that it will be taken up by the Scotch branches of it, in the face of the appeal which I have made to them, in common with the world at large; and that Scotchmen will be found "leading the way," with characters that are "high-toned and handsomely pitched."

I remain, Rev'd Sir, your very ob't serv't,

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, *November, 1st.* 1884.

The Church of England and the Gipsies.

RIGHT REV., VERY REV. AND REV. SIRS:—

I take the liberty of addressing the Church of England, through its Bishops, Deans and Canons, as representing the Christian and British sentiment, as well as the humanity and culture, of the people of England, on the subject of the "Social Emancipation of the Gipsies," alluded to in the accompanying circular entitled *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*. With this object in view, I send to each of them, herewith, a copy of a pamphlet entitled *The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies*, with special reference to the article on *The English Universities and John Bunyan* (pp. 20–26).

A step like this is so great a departure from conventional usage that it should be accompanied by an explanation. This can be given only in the form of it being said that the subject justifies some such course, for it applies to a feeling of caste that exists against a part of the population, and which I described in another place as "the most difficult thing to grapple with."

I also said that "when the Gipsies arrived in Great Britain, before 1506, and for generations thereafter, they were on a footing of equality, so far as education was concerned, with the 'best in the land.'" But as the native inhabitants progressed they left more and more behind the Gipsy element that remained in its primitive condition, and led to the distance between them becoming greater and greater, from generation to generation. In the very nature of things, this Asiatic tented tribe, introduced into England, would disappear, *to the eye*, in the shape of "mixed breeds," as it acquired settled habits. None of these ever having been acknowledged became, or rather remained, true to "the blood," whatever became of them (the exceptions having to be considered on their individual merits), and preserved an absolute silence on the subject to the rest of the population. In England to-day it is questionable if there are any Gipsies of absolute purity of blood, which is an arbitrary and indefinite expression at the best. Some are considered such, so far as is known; but, with these exceptions, the race is greatly mixed, and is found of many surnames, and in many positions in life.

In another place I said that if the subject of the Gipsies meant "only a certain style of life that may cease at any moment," it "would be deserving of little notice." Such is not the nature of it, for it is not a "style of life," but a "sense of tribe," or a "soul of nationality," that is inherent in "the blood" (the Gipsy sentiment going with the Gipsy blood), so that the feeling is transmitted from generation to generation, and remains peculiar to the people in every relation of life. From this it follows that many of this race, that has existed in England since 1506, should be spoken of and regarded, treated and respected by society in the manner done with others in no way related to the Gipsy tribe.

It was with this object in view that I published, in 1880, a amphlet entitled *The English Universities and John Bunyan*, in the belief that the "University Men of England" would be "above the vulgar prejudice of objecting to it being said that Bunyan was a Gipsy, disregardless of evidence to that effect." I have said that a "feeling of caste" is "the most difficult thing to grapple with." Like an affection of the nerves, it is often almost, if not altogether, involuntary; a thing not tangible, but somewhat atmospheric in its nature; such as calls for a delicate and natural mode of treatment. The remedy in this case seems to be discussion, accompanied by the publicly-expressed belief of people whose opinions are apt to influence others.

To most of people it should appear unreasonable that a prejudice should exist against an Englishman merely on account of his blood, which is often, for the most part, "ordinary English," with only a "dash" of Gipsy in it; whic latter, when added to the upbringing, and consequent peculiarities of mind, constitutes him a "member of t e tribe."

People speaking the English language have earned a "hard" character in their intercourse with coloured races whose territories they invaded for colonization or conquest. But in the case of the Gipsies, the race seems to have been legally and socially proscribed, in a greater or less degree, everywhere; with this difference, that they were the *invaders* for "colonization or conquest," in a sense culiar to themselves. Be that as it may, the Gipsies are to be found everywhere; "the blood" having been "worked into the 'warp and woof' of humanity, although not acknowledged by the rest of the species" (p. 15).

The question at issue is mainly one of principle, or a *pro-forma* proposition, viz.: whether this name, tribe or race, mixed in regard to blood as it is, after living in England since the time of Henry VIII., must remain forever socially proscribed, or whether, as I have said in regard to John Bunyan, in *John Bunyan and the Gipsies*,

"Everything else being equal, such a man, instead of having a prejudice entertained for him, is entitled to a greater respect than should be shown to another who labours under no such prejudice in regard to his blood" (p. 7).

As illustrative of the mere "conventional sentimentality" involved in the question on hand, I may ask why should any reasonable man conceive a dislike or prejudice against a neighbour, or even a relative, on it "leaking out" that he was a "member of the tribe," whom he had up to that time regarded and respected as an ordinary native of the soil? Here the prejudice of caste—operating on both sides—would be met half way. To keep it up against "the blood," and the associations accompanying it, will perpetuate the existence of "the tribe," which an acknowledgment might possibly break up. In the face, and independent of it, we can easily understand of the Gipsies, that "let them be in whatever situation of life they may, they all 'stick to each other'" (*His.*, p. 370).

Even in regard to the more primitive English Gipsies I said, in *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*, that

"It is astonishing, when the Gipsies 'drop the Gipsy' for the time being, and we also ignore the fact, how sensibly they talk, and how little there is to distinguish them from others; many of whom in that respect they excel" (p. 17). And in the *Disquisition on the Gipsies*, that "in Great Britain the Gipsies are entitled, in one respect at least, to be called Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen; for their general ideas as men, as distinguished from their being Gipsies, and their language, indicate them at once to be such nearly as much as the common natives of these countries" (p. 372).

In that respect an English Gipsy, even of the most primitive kind, as distinguished from one of another country, is "John Bull all over."

This is the subject which I am desirous of bringing under the special notice of Englishmen, through the medium of the Church of England, with the hope that its liberality, or toleration, or even indifference (frequently a virtue in itself) will not be appealed to in vain. These should even lead the Church to throw around oppressed races its protection, as against the prejudices of members of other religious denominations. Indeed, I wrote to the Rev. James Copner, Vicar of Elstow, in *John Bunyan and the Gipsies*, as follows:—

"I think that ministers of the Church of England should do more for the subject of the Gipsies, in the light in which I have presented it, than could be expected from those of other denominations" (p. 6). "It appeals to every principle of fair play and abstract reason, that a race that has been in Great Britain for 375 years must be considered, in many respects, British, whatever its origin, or whatever the habits of some of it may be. It would be very wrong to show and perpetuate a prejudice against the name, or blood as such, however little or however much there may be of it in the person possessing and claiming it" (p. 7).

I have said that my addressing the Church of England in this way is "so great a departure from conventional usage that it should be accompanied by an explanation": which remark, perhaps, need not have been made, for my motive and object, I hope, will, in the estimation of many, not merely excuse, but consecrate the step taken.

I remain, Right Rev., Very Rev. and Rev. Sirs,

Your very obt. sevt.,

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, *December 1st*, 1884.

The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies.

REV. SIR:—

I take the liberty of directing the attention of the three Scotch Presbyterian Churches to the accompanying pamphlet, entitled *Was John Bunyan a Gipsy? An Address to the British Press*, with the idea that it will interest them, and lead them to do something towards settling this question, as applicable to John Bunyan personally, and especially for its bearing on the social recognition or emancipation of a large body of people in Great Britain and the world generally, occupying many positions in life.

To a person of average intelligence and candour it appears so offensive as to be resented, that the Rev. John Brown of Bedford should maintain that Bunyan's "descent," which was "well known to many," was from "a broken-down branch of an aristocratic family that entered England with William the Conqueror"; so that the origin of his family or his "father's house" was "the noblest and most honoured of all the families in the land," as would be applicable to people of Norman descent. Instead of that, all the world knows, and has always known, that the family were English tinkers, or what in Scotland were and are called "tinklers," but of a superior class of them. Mr. Brown, however, has the credit of discovering that the family possessed a cottage and a little ground attached. From this he concludes that the family were not Gipsies, for "the positive evidence which he has adduced has settled the question forever"; while the only "positive evidence" which he has "adduced" "settles the question" of his ignorance of the subject.

In my *Disquisition on the Gipsies*, written before 1858 and published in 1865, I said that

> "Bunyan's grandfather might have been an ordinary native even of fair birth," or "his ancestor on the native side of the house might have been one of the 'many English loiterers' who joined the Gipsies on their arrival in England, when they were 'esteemed and held in great admiration'" (p. 518). And that "John Bunyan belongs to the world at large, and England is only entitled to the credit of the formation of his character" (p. 519).

For this reason no one should be allowed to treat this subject in a way to suit his caprice, whatever form that caprice may assume. Should it ever become conventional and fashionable to believe that John Bunyan was a Gipsy, we will doubtless see men like the Rev. John Brown of Bedford acting as "masters of ceremonies" in officiously maintaining it.

I have said, in the pamphlet referred to, that when the subject of the Gipsies is "investigated and understood," it "luminously explains the origin of John Bunyan." Unfortunately no one seems inclined to move in the matter, but prefers leaving it in the "slough of despond." I said in *Contributions to Natural History, etc.*, that

> "Two prominent Scotchmen, each controlling an organ which should have entertained this question, have gone to their graves without apparently daring to look it in the face. How strange it is that 'champions of the truth and standard-bearers of the Lord,' that might lay their necks on the block, or go to the stake, for their religious professions and opinions, will yet (so far as I can judge) quail before Mrs. Grundy on being asked to entertain the question whether or not John Bunyan was a Gipsy!" (p. 203).

This difficulty can be got over in the way I have always maintained, viz., that the subject should be discussed privately before being publicly mooted. For this purpose the organization of the Scotch Churches naturally presented itself to me, in the way of sending information to the Clerks of the Presbyteries, to be handed by them to the other members, and afterwards to their friends generally, and making the subject one of discussion on appropriate occasions. In this way the information would, to a great extent,

becom: like much of our knowledge that does not require an effort of the intellect to comprehend and receive it, but is accepted, 'not as a matter of enquiry or evidence, but merely something floating in the air, like any popular idea.'"

After many years' labour I have only been enabled lately to learn (and that *privately*) that people in Scotland "do not deny that there are many people amongst them who are of Gipsy blood, and are aware of it, but they do not believe that these are Gipsies." One would naturally think that these are "members of the tribe," that are averse to admit it publicly, as did one to me when he said, "I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family." To me it has always been a mystery how it came to be believed by intelligent people that, by a mere change of habits, the Gipsies have "ceased to be Gipsies" and become "common natives" by being "absorbed by the rest of the population," without understanding what was asserted, or giving the subject a serious thought. After all I have written on this subject it seems unnecessary for me to say on this occasion that habits, character, calling, or religion do not constitute any race as distinguished from another, or native families from other native families. And surely these circumstances can have no possible bearing on the question of people being or not being members of the Gipsy tribe, that arrived in the country as if it were yesterday, and has been forced by a legal and social proscription to assume an incognito among their fellow-creatures, whom they, for the most part, outwardly resemble in every respect. It should instinctively appeal to the most ordinary intelligence that people of Gipsy blood and sentiments, while highly pleased with them, will naturally hide them from the rest of the world; so that something should be done to get them to acknowledge themselves, and be respected, precisely as if they were ordinary natives, or failing that, to establish the principle, whether the Gipsy element should respond or not. Since "the blood" has been in Scotland since 1506—that is 380 years—it may well call itself and be regarded as Scotch, and particularly as "the blood" at the present day is for the most part "ordinary or common Scotch," whatever "members of the tribe" may say to the contrary. In this way the race has been "worked into the 'warp and woof' of humanity, although not acknowledged by the rest of the species."

Simple as this subject is in itself, there is doubtless a little preliminary difficulty in understanding it, as there is in youths applying their school or college knowledge to practical life, or men even of mature years in using one kind of information for other purposes. In anticipation of a certain kind of objectors I wrote thus in my *Disquisition on the Gipsies*:—

"It was the nature of man in ancient times as it is with the heathen to-day, to *worship* what could not be understood, while modern civilization seems to attribute such phenomena to *miracles*. It is even presumptuous to have recourse to such an alternative, for the enquirer may be deficient in the intellect necessary to prosecute such investigations or he may not be in possession of sufficient data" (p. 533).

Desperate diseases requiring desperate remedies is the reason for my addressing you in the way I have done, on a subject that is peculiarly suited to the Scotch cast of mind.

I remain, Rev'd Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, January 1st, 1887.

THE EDINBURGH GIPSY LORE SOCIETY.

A SOCIETY under this name has been established at Edinburgh, of which Mr. C. G. Leland has been appointed president. In a circular which I addressed to the Scottish Churches I said: "Consider for a moment that this race or blood, and every idea connected with it, became legally and socially proscribed, and that the people represented by it have never been acknowledged in any form or relation, and it should easily be believed that the race has been forced to maintain an incognito among their fellow-creatures. . . . . By their blood having become mixed with the ordinary one of Scotland they would soon come to resemble them, as in their *habits* they assimilated with the natives of the soil."

In a circular addressed to the Church of England, I said: "In the very nature of things this Asiatic tented tribe, introduced into England, would disappear, *to the eye*, in the shape of mixed breeds, as it acquired settled habits. . . . In Great Britain the Gipsies are entitled, in one respect at least, to be called Englishmen, Scotchmen or Irishmen, for their general ideas as men, as distinguished from their being Gipsies, and their language indicate them at once to be such, nearly as much as the common natives of these countries." "If the subject of the Gipsies meant only a certain style of life, that may cease at any moment, it would be deserving of little notice. Such is not the nature of it, for it is not a style of life, but a sense of tribe or a soul of nationality, that is inherent in the blood."

I have said that it is "a people appearing so lately in Europe from the East, originally a swarthy tented or travelling tribe, of robber habits, that was legally and socially proscribed everywhere, and that has for the most part disappeared *to the eye*, by becoming mixed with native blood and adopting native habits." Thus, when a person of respectable character and calling and standing in society says to me, "I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family," he means that that is his blood or race, and that at some time his ancestors followed the life and bore the character of what is popularly understood to be a Gipsy. The real interest, in the higher sense of the word, attaching to this people is centered in the relation in which it stands to others around it, with reference to intermarriage and the destiny of the mixed progeny and that of the tribe generally, especially in English-speaking countries.

There is some resemblance between the Gipsies and the "coloured people" in the United States, excepting that the appearance of the Gipsies is difficult of detection after they leave the tent, and frequently absolutely so as "the blood" becomes mixed with the White. On that head I have said: "And yet, great as is the prejudice against the Africans in the United States, it is limited in its nature—that is, it is confined to certain relations in life, and does not extend to denying their virtues or even existence, as happens with the Gipsies in Europe, when, in their *habits*, they have assimilated with those that are generally termed natives of the soil." Thus I have said that the race "has been forced to assume an incognito and remain true to its origin, with its blood and a sense of tribe and soul of nationality, and a cast of mind and words and signs peculiar to itself," like a masonic society. And in popular estimation I have said that "the idea of presenting the race, so far as it is known, for the respect of the world seems to many to be little better than picking up a rattlesnake and proposing to make a man of him; while in Scotland the humblest native will say that he would as soon take a toad to his bosom as marry a tinkler," or Gipsy.

I have also said that "Civilization should not tolerate the idea that a large part of the population must remain forever socially proscribed to gratify the prejudice of caste of the others"; and that the Gipsy race should not be morally forced (as now) to "skulk through life like thieves, conspirators or assassins, afraid of being apprehended by all they meet with in the event of these coming to learn all about them, however good their characters may be." The American familiarity with the questions of race and secret societies should facilitate an investigation and discussion of this subject; the more especially as there are very many of this race in the United States, but comparatively few following the primitive ways of it. On this account I append a copy of a letter which I sent lately to Edinburgh with reference to the "Gipsy Lore Society" there, with the idea that what I have done will interest the American reader generally:—

Before consenting to become a member of the "Gipsy Lore Society" I would like to be informed on the following points: What might be the motives and objects of those starting it, and how and by whom

will it likely be managed and controlled? Do those forming it believe that "very soon there will not be one Gipsy in existence in civilized countries"? or, as Mr. Leland expressed it, that "the child is perhaps born who would see the last Gipsy"? or that the race have become "common natives," in no way related to the Gipsy tribe? If that is so, what object of any interest or importance could be served by such publications as those contemplated? As far back as 1858 I wrote (and published in 1865) a treatise on the Gipsies, when I suggested that a "British Anti-Gipsy-Prejudice Association" (p. 441) should be formed in Scotland, so as to induce those of Gipsy blood to acknowledge themselves and be respected like the ordinary inhabitants of the soil. And yet, after thirty years' labour and spending fully £1,000 in money and fully £1,000 in simple interest on it, I find, in reply to an inquiry made in intelligent circles in Edinburgh, that people in Scotland "do not deny that there are many people amongst them who are of Gipsy blood and who are aware of it, but they do not believe that these are Gipsies"; while the last remark I have seen made was by the Rev. John Brown of Bedford, when he said that I was "possessed by a harmless craze" in asserting that John Bunyan was a member of the Gipsy race.

If there is so great a difficulty in creating an interest in this subject as a *living* one, embracing a large number of people in Scotland and the world generally, that look back to the tented stock as their ancestors, I see little chance of getting one created for it as a subject that is *dead* or that will soon be so. That seems to be the view of the tribe held by *all* the people mentioned in the circular so far as I know. With their ideas I have no sympathy, and I have very fully reviewed Messrs. Leland and Groome, as can be found in small publications to be had of Messrs. Maclachlan & Stewart, Edinburgh, viz., *John Bunyan and the Gipsies* (1882) and *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies* (1881). And yet the parties mentioned have never "admitted or rejected" what I have been advocating for so long a time, as personally known to myself, and I think obvious to any one who will regard evidence and the "nature of things." Indeed, on this subject I have appealed, unsuccessfully, to a great variety of journals and societies, and classes of people and kinds of readers in Great Britain.

Another objection to the proposal is that, after the first issue of the quarterly journal, the publication is to be given exclusively to the members of the Society, so that the press and the public at large will never see it, thus giving no guarantee that it will be conducted so as to "investigate the Gipsy question in as thorough and many-sided a manner as possible." In former times Literary Clubs issued prospectuses of what they were to publish, so that people joining them had no doubt about what they were to expect and pay for, with perhaps the "notes and comments" of people enjoying the confidence of the public. But in the present case the circular gives no assurance of even the Society being able to carry out its prospectus; it does not even say where the publications are to be issued. I think that copies should at all times be given to certain societies and some of the press as a standing advertisement, and be for sale to the public generally, so that any profit arising therefrom might be applied to reduce the cost to the members of the Society, and impart confidence and interest generally.

Instead of founding a "Gipsy Lore Society" I think there is much more room to establish one for the "Social Emancipation of the Gipsies," which would include *everything* as applicable to the past, the present and the future of the race, and would "give the subject an importance that could not well attach to it were the *race*, as is generally believed, confined to people strolling over the world in the condition popularly understood of the Gipsies." Of Walter Simson's *History of the Gipsies*, edited and continued by myself, I have said that "in the ordinary course of things what is contained in this work would be commented on, admitted or rejected, so far as current ideas are concerned, and taken as the basis of future investigations. But the writers alluded to have apparently never seen or heard of the book, and are, therefore, not 'read up' on the subject they discuss; or they purposely ignore it, and so raise the question whether they are merely treating the subject to make a paragraph or maintain a theory" (*Contributions, etc., p.* 184).

You will please make whatever use you like of this letter.

I am, &c.,

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, 18th June, 1888.

THE SCOTTISH PEOPLE AND PRESS AND THE GIPSIES.

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A GENTLEMAN IN SCOTLAND.

I WOULD like to know the *real* reasons why the Scotch press and Scotch people refuse to do justice to the subject of the Gipsies as set forth by me. I do not ask and do not wish *you* to do this *yourself*, but that you might put this letter into the hands of *various* people of intelligence and candour, and ask them to put fully on paper the *real* reasons applicable to the subject. And to remove all sense of delicacy, in speaking plainly and candidly, I would prefer to have their opinions unsigned, and in a handwriting different from their own.

Is it likely, as the *Perthshire Courier* says, that I have been "boycotted" by the Scotch press? And what might be the *real* reasons for that? I might say that I could speak very positively on a certain fact that I knew to be such by three of my senses—seeing, touching and hearing—and understanding what was said to me, viz.: that the Gipsy race does *not* "cease" to be such by a change of circumstances, as seems to have been the opinion of the world up to the time when I first published on the subject (1856).

Is it likely that the press generally, as expressing popular opinion, however unenlightened, has so committed itself to the current belief on this subject that it cannot reconsider its opinions and correct them, without being deemed inconsistent in its principles and policy?

Is it likely that the public feeling towards the name of Gipsy, and everything connected with it, is such that there is no possibility of having the subject entertained? saying nothing of having "the blood" openly acknowledged and respected, as much as any other blood and descent, and feeling of family, clan or nationality? and that nothing should be done to induce such people to acknowledge themselves freely and openly?

When I am told that the reason for the action of the press is that "the subject is not one to interest the public," I have no alternative but to say that I cannot conscientiously believe that that is the *real* reason, excepting that *promiscuous* people, knowing nothing about it, *can* have no *interest* in it until they are "taught and trained to understand it, and believe in it, and take an interest in it, and do justice to it." It is natural to suppose that since 1506—nearly four centuries ago—there should be a great change in the position, condition and character of the Gipsy race in Scotland. Even as a *Scotch* subject, of such long standing, it should interest Scotch people of *various* kinds, if the press could only muster up courage and candour to inform its readers in regard to it; especially when there is in Scotland to-day a relatively large body of people who are "born and live and die incognito"—this "secret and silent people," originally from the "tent and roads," that are not allowed to "open their mouths or raise their heads above water." Do not intelligent people believe this?

Does it offend *old* men—saying nothing of middle-aged or young people, and "women and children"—to be told that they must learn or be taught to take an interest in a subject of which they know nothing personally, and in that respect become as "new-born babes to be suckled with new ideas"?

In the appendix to my *Reminiscences of Childhood at Inverkeithing, or Life at a Lazaretto* (1882) I wrote thus: "A book of such a nature [as the *History of the Gipsies*], originating as this one did on being returned to Scotland in 1865, was entitled to be received there with the greatest courtesy and candour; for such is not a thing of every-day occurrence, that can be passed over as a matter of indifference" (p. 77). At this distance, and without *real* information on the subject, I find it difficult to form an intelligible opinion on the phenomenon alluded to. As far back as 1871 I said that "the apathy and contempt and unreflecting incredulity here spoken of naturally blind people to facts the most obvious and incontestable, and become under Providence a complete protection against

any enquiry regarding 'the tribe' in the singular position which it occupies in the world" (*Contributions, etc.*, 1875, p. 155, and *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies*, 1881, p. 32). To this it was natural for me to add, in *The Scottish Press and the Gipsies* (1890): "The interest has to be *created*, and will doubtless ultimately be so, unless heaven, to protect this people against the prejudices of the rest of their fellow-creatures, has judicially blinded them, or smitten them with intellectual and moral paralysis" (p. 105).

I hope you will oblige me in the way explained, for, as I said in *The Social Emancipation of the Gipsies* (1884): "What is wanted in this matter is co-operation, for it seems unreasonable that all the trouble and expense connected with such a cause should fall upon one person, who is little able to bear both of them" (p. 8).

Yours truly,

JAMES SIMSON.

I send the above to the Editors of all the Scotch Press, with the idea that, if they do not bring this subject forward in their columns, they will oblige me by handing it to private people, who might also oblige me, either openly or anonymously (for the "difficulty" seems to be of a *social* nature), in the way mentioned. There seems to be a great hesitancy or aversion to treat the Gipsy question in any form; which is in perfect accordance with the nature of man and society, for as a late writer has said, "Since the dawn of history, opposition to whatever was destined to prove beneficial to humanity has been, almost without exception, the general pervading spirit of every age." I never was, nor am I now, so unreasonable as to expect, under the circumstances, other treatment than has been shown to almost every one before me, as I have put on record on many occasions. On one of these I said that such a person should

"Have been satisfied to have had his work abused rather than not noticed at all; either of which is the common fate of what adds to knowledge when something has to make way for it." And that "one reason for it is the opposition, or the objection to discussion, on the part of those who have such things in their special keeping, and the consequent indifference, incredulity, or even aversion of those who look to them for light on the subjects treated." "Conventionalism, in some form, is an essential element in society, or rather constitutes it, however it may change; and is a great good in itself, provided that it does not last too long or go too far, and is accompanied by the courtesy and candour that open the way to the entertainment, discussion, and reception of truth, whatever it may refer to." I also said: "How careful people should be in making assertions that may cause much evil, and more labour in setting them aside."

The leading fact in the subject of the Gipsies can be ascertained, as I have said, by "three of the senses and the understanding"—that Gipsies do not "cease to be such by a change of circumstances." There are no imaginable means by which they can "cease to be Gipsies"; nor is it necessary for a race to have a religion peculiar to itself to constitute it a race, nor that it should follow any peculiar style of life, or have any peculiar kind of character, as would be applicable to the Negro race in America, or any clan or family in Scotland or any country. And the same principle applies to Gipsies of mixed blood, as illustrated by the admission of a very respectable Scotchman—"I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family," that is, one of this eastern race that arrived so recently in Scotland, while following a tented life, and whose descendants, owing to a mixture of native blood, are now to be found of all colours and in many positions in life; the Gipsy feeling going with the Gipsy blood; *both* being in reality *natives* of Scotland, and perhaps of the same name, the Gipsy element having become such very soon after its arrival in Scotland, in or about 1506, and has never been acknowledged, but is found living incognito, in the way described. These I would include as Scotch, whatever the blood, having a regard only to other matters relating to them. All this is elaborately explained in my *Disquisition* appended to the *History* (pp. 575, Sampson Low & Co., 1865), the prefatory note to which, dated London, October 10th, 1865, is annexed.

In the *Disquisition* I wrote as follows:—

"A very important circumstance contributing to this state of things is the antipathy which mankind have for the very name of Gipsy, which, as I have already said, they all take to themselves; insomuch that the better class will not face it. They imagine that, so-

cially speaking, they are among the damned, and they naturally cast their lot with the damned. Still, the antagonistic spirit which would naturally arise towards society, in the minds of such Gipsies, remains in a measure latent; for they feel confident in their incognito, while moving among their fellow-creatures; which circumstance robs it of its sting" (p. 425).—"Apart from the sense of justice which is implied in admitting these Gipsies, as Gipsies, to a social equality with others, a motive of policy should lead us to take such a step; for it can augur no good to society to have the Gipsy race residing in its midst, under the cloud that hangs over it. Let us, by a liberal and enlightened policy, at least blunt the edge of that antipathy which many of the Gipsy race have, and most naturally have, to society at large" (p. 445)—especially a great variety of out-door members of the tribe—originally a "tented robber race," proscribed by law and society, and never acknowledged—that are not by any means all honest members of society.—"The Gipsy element of society is like a troubled spirit, which has been despised, persecuted, and damned; cross it out, to appearance as much as you may, it still retains its Gipsy identity. It then assumes the form of a disembodied spirit, that will enter into any kind of tabernacle, in the manner described, dispel every other kind of spirit, clean or unclean as the case may be, and come up, under any garb, colour, character, occupation or creed, Gipsy" (p. 451).—"You cannot crush or cross out the Gipsy race; so thoroughly subtle, so thoroughly adaptable, so thoroughly capable is it to evade every weapon that can be forged against it" (p. 498).—"The principle of progression, the passing through one phase of history into another, while the race maintains its identity, holds good with the Gipsies, as well as with any other people" (p. 414).—"Let the name of Gipsy be as much respected in Scotland as it is now despised, and the community would stare to see the civilized Gipsies make their appearance; they would come buzzing out, like bees, emerging even from places where a person, not in the secret, never would have reamt of" (p. 481).

On another occasion I said: "To ignore the whole subject would be moral cowardice, and would perpetuate what an acknowledgment might possibly break up. The social emancipation of the Gipsies is in reality a turning-point in history. It is surrounded by many difficulties." As I have already said, the leading facts of it can be ascertained by "three of the senses and the understanding"; which should satisfy any one, whether scientific or not, as to the real merits of it.

J. S.

NEW YORK, *February* 10, 1891.

THE SOCIAL EMANCIPATION OF THE GIPSIES.

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A GENTLEMAN IN ENGLAND.

I AM in receipt of your letter of the 25th February [with reference to *The Scottish People and Press and the Gipsies: a letter addressed to a gentleman in Scotland*, of the 10th February]. I notice particularly what you say of certain people, that they "wish the Gipsy connection ignored, forgotten, hidden." That is very natural and proper in itself as against *outsiders;* and even with many of *the tribe*, for, as I have said of those in England, "the more mixed and better classes are even afraid of each other." It is much more so in Scotland. Why should any "member of the tribe"—however mixed his blood may be, and whatever his position in life—officiously proclaim himself such to the world? In many ways it would be foolish for him to do it at the *present* stage of the question, saying nothing of compromising others connected with him, in the event of the public understanding what was told it. Besides, it is no one's business to know who or what he is. There are many things connected with *any one* and his relatives that need not be made public, but rather kept hidden. And why should not the being "a member of the Gipsy tribe" come *first* in that respect? In the *Scottish Churches and the Gipsies* (1881) I said that "it would not be desirable" to raise the question "*who* are and who are not Gipsies until the principle has been thoroughly established by society that there is no prejudice against a person on that account alone" (p. 23).

To explain this I would only have to repeat what I have published at great length on many occasions. The following is what I wrote when introducing John Bunyan in my *Disquisition*:—

> "It can hardly be said that any Gipsy denies at heart the fact of his being a Gipsy (which indeed is a contradiction in terms) let him disguise it from others as much as he may. If I could find such a man he would be the only one of his race whom I would feel inclined to despise as such" (p. 506).

How *he* came to be a Gipsy seems to have been by a *native* English publican of the name of Bunyan having married a *Gipsy* woman, perhaps generations before the birth of the immortal dreamer; which would change the descent and sense of race, tribe or family, as long as it was remembered: and it was not in the nature of things that *that* was likely or possible to be forgotten.

I find that the great difficulty to be encountered in the *Social Emancipation of the Gipsies* lies in mankind's limited faculties, and its natural incapacity and aversion to be taught *new* ideas, especially when they run counter to inherited ignorant beliefs and prejudices of nearly four centuries' standing. This was illustrated in an article in *All the Year Round*, on the 17th March, 1866, in which it was said: "We may be excused if we somewhat doubt the accuracy of statements which cannot be proved by any modern methods known to us"; and "We do not believe it." This might have been written by Dickens himself; it seems to have at least been approved of by him as the editor and proprietor. The idea of people being "Gipsies," irrespective of mixtures of blood and outward circumstances, may be termed an "elementary truth," which is the "hardest of all to learn."

There seems to be only one way of treating the Gipsy question, that is, by investigation and discussion, for with these it can take care of itself. The reconciliation between the two races—the *Gipsy* one, beginning with it in its most primitive state, as it appeared in Great Britain nearly four centuries ago, and its condition to-day, as found in a greatly mixed state, and in many positions in life, and the *other* one—must come from the native or ordinary inhabitants of Scotland or England or any other country; for the Gipsy element is almost invariably silent on the subject. The work involves much trouble and expense. I wrote in *John Bunyan and the Gipsies*, in 1886, that I had been out of pocket fully £2,000 in principal and interest; and that "the *Social Emancipation of the Gipsies*, could it be brought about, would be cheap, at an expenditure of even £20,000 to a person who had the money to lay out on it" (p. 63).

Every race of which there is any record, or can be thought of, has had a barbarous origin and history. The Gipsy one in Great Britain and Ireland is no exception to this rule. Leaving out the remains of the *wild* stock, and others of questionable character in common with *other* members of the community, "the tribe" included John Bunyan, Dr. Robert Gordon of the High Church, Edinburgh, and Mrs. Carlyle; and now includes many others in various positions in life, but it is

difficult, almost impossible, to get them to acknowledge the fact. The descent is certainly wild and barbarous and roguish, but that is peculiar to the descent of all original tribes. In my *Disquisition* [written in 1858 and] appended to the *History of the Gipsies* (pp. 575, Sampson Low & Co., 1865), I wrote thus:—

"True to nature, every Gipsy," however he may hide it from others, "is delighted with his descent, no matter what other people, in their ignorance of the subject, may think of it, or what their prejudices may be in regard to it" (p. 500). "They are not a heaven-born race, but they certainly found their way into the country as if they had dropped into it out of the clouds. . . . . One could hardly have a . . . . more romantic descent," especially if "the person whose descent it is, is to be found amid the ranks of Scots," or other nationalities, "with talents, a character, and a position equal to those of others around him" (p. 479).

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, March 10, 1891.

On the 3d of April I sent to a gentleman in London a letter from which the following are extracts:—

I duly received your letter of the 26th February. I send herewith a pamphlet entitled the *Scottish Press and the Gipsies* (1890). At page 95 I said that the "existence of this race in Scotland may well be believed in, when it is based on the evidence of Scotch kings' letters, and acts and writs of the Scots parliament, the records of courts, and national and local tradition, from 1506 downwards" (which is as applicable to England). And that, by the evidence of "three of the senses and the understanding," it can be ascertained that the descendants of the wild stock exist, and cannot cease to exist, as Gipsies of various mixtures of blood, and in many positions in life, as set forth in the *Letter* of the 10th February, 1891. I also send a pamphlet entitled *Letters to the Church of England and the Scottish Churches on the Gipsies and John Bunyan.* These consist of circulars remaining over on different occasions [between 1 November, 1884, and 1 January, 1887], now bound together. Although I have plates for them all, there were only 12 copies in this form. I sent one to the British Museum, and one to the Bodleian Library, and the one to you will represent the whole sent to Great Britain.

The *Letter* of the 10th February, I sent as follows: London press, 120; English provincial, 172; Scotch, 210; Welsh, 6; Irish, 22—in all 530 copies; and *very freely* to a *great variety* of public people and institutions in Scotland. By and by I may again address the English Bishops, Deans and Canons. In short, if I may say so, my endeavour since 1856 has been to educate all classes, however offensive the meaning of the idea or phrase may be [to some people]. Still, I hope I have been sufficiently polite with the Church of England.

On the 17th of April I wrote to another gentleman in London as follows:—

I duly received your letter of the 24th March, with its accompanying publications. I return thanks for your kind offer, but my tastes really do not run in the way indicated. My sole object in sending —— (in common with many other Societies) the various publications I have done from time to time was to find, if possible, some sympathy, and moral, social and *conventional* assistance, in having justice done to the Gipsy race in its great variety of mixtures of blood and characters and positions in life, after being in Great Britain for nearly four centuries. It seems that there is a much greater chance in getting a hearing for what is to be found in the centre of Africa, or in the depths of antiquity, than what exists at home, and in direct contact with us, although not necessarily known to us, but which need not be so, as explained in my printed *Letter* of the 10th February last.

I think you could serve many *public* purposes (too numerous to mention) by enlisting the curiosity and sympathy of some of the members of the —— to take up the subject of the Gipsies in some way. [Here follows the passage quoted in my letter to the editor of the *Athenæum* of the 27th April.]

I sent the following *article* to the *Athenæum* on the day mentioned in it:—

JOHN BUNYAN.

I find it stated in the *Athenæum* of the 21st March that I am the "chief upholder" of John Bunyan having been "of Gipsy birth," and the Rev. John Brown of Bedford that he was not. And further, that "much ink has been spilt over the question." This need not have been so, had people considered that Bunyan was, what he admitted, a "tinker" (which is simply a Gipsy of mixed blood), although in conventional and correct language he called himself a "brazier," as all Gipsies of a certain class do. In Scotland the word used is "tinkler," which, it never has been disputed, means a Gipsy of mixed blood, although generally denied

by the person himself. Mrs. Carlyle's progenitor on the Gipsy side of the house, William Baillie, is designated in a legal document in 1725 as a "brazier, commonly called Gipsy." His son Matthew, Mrs. Carlyle's hero—the granduncle of her *maternal* grandmother—went under the name of a "tinkler chief."

How John Bunyan came to be a Gipsy seems, as I have said elsewhere [as above], to have been by

> "A *native* English publican of the name of Bunyan having married a *Gipsy* woman, perhaps generations before the birth of the immortal dreamer; which would change the descent and sense of race, tribe or family, as long as it was remembered: and it was not in the nature of things that *that* was likely or possible to be forgotten."

How the Gipsies acquired native names was by "assuming them, and by intermarriages with males of the native race, when the issue would pass into the Gipsy current in society." This would be more apt to be the case in their palmy days, and even long after their arrival in or about 1506. We find in a Scots Writ in 1554 "John Brown and George Brown, Egyptians," who had been the children of a native father, or who had previously assumed the surname of Brown, the first being the most probable; in which case they were probably born previous to 1534. There is no way to account for Bunyan being anything but a Gipsy of mixed blood when he said that his "descent" was "well known to many," as from the "meanest and most despised of all the families in the land," and "not of the Israelites," but travelling tinkers, or braziers commonly called Gipsies, having a small homestead, acquired through a *native* progenitor. This marriage doubtless led to a large progeny and their early marriages, and possibly might have been, in the first or second generation, the origin of "James Bownian an Egiptian rogue," whose son Nicholas was baptized at Launceston on the 4th March, 1586, as stated in the *Athenæum* of the 21st March.

I attach little or no importance to surnames as such, for there is a wonderful variety of these among the Gipsies in Great Britain and Ireland; and it would be easy to "duplicate" a native name among the Gipsies of various mixtures of blood and in many positions in life. Hence the unreasonableness of Mr. Brown saying that John Bunyan could not have been a Gipsy (of mixed blood) because the *surname* (variously spelt) had been known centuries before the arrival of the Gipsies. This would be as applicable to it being said that "John Brown and George Brown, Egyptians," in the Scots Writ of 1554, and who were perhaps born before 1534, could not have been Gipsies because the Browns were in England centuries before the Gipsies!

On this question as regards Bunyan we have nothing to "go upon" but Bunyan's "own words," which did not mean that he was "descended" from people who "arrived with William the Conqueror." His having been a tinker was in itself sufficient to prove that he was a Gipsy of mixed blood, having a homestead, while he followed his *hereditary* calling of a tinker for perhaps many miles around it. John Bunyan was not merely "descended from Gipsies," or "of Gipsy birth," but a "Gipsy of mixed blood." To understand that involves the reception of an "elementary truth," which is the "hardest of all to learn." JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, 27 April, 1891.

I sent the following *letter* to the editor at the same time:—

I hope you will print the enclosed article on *John Bunyan*, and send me two copies of your paper containing it. But should you not take it, you will please destroy it, and send me a *blank* postal, the meaning of which I will understand. Under any circumstances, I will conclude that you have declined the paper if I do not hear from you after a reasonable time.

Will you permit me, without being offensive, to make the following remarks: I do not think that the *Athenæum* should occupy a false position on the subjects of John Bunyan and the Gipsies, or on *any* question. By inserting the present paper you will doubtless, without unsaying anything, to a certain extent, place your journal in its proper position before the world. Literary journals when treating certain subjects stand much in need of writers who can do it for them. I am sure that the Rev. John Brown of Bedford (whom I have treated lightly on the present occasion) is a very unreliable guide, for many reasons, given on several occasions—the last of which was in the *Scottish Press and the Gipsies* (1890), sent herewith. I would specially refer to the ancestry of Mrs. Carlyle and John Bunyan, at pages 108 and 112, and to the note at page 115, on the "changing of a race."

Mr. Leland has little, if anything, to

say on Bunyan, and nearly nothing on modern Gipsydom in *all* the bearings of the question, and decidedly *spoils* the subject, as I fully explained in *Mr. Leland on the Gipsies* (pp. 8–18) in *John Bunyan and the Gipsies* (1882), a copy of which I think I sent you at the time. I also send herewith a 2-page sheet entitled the *Edinburgh Gipsy Lore Society* (June 18, 1888), in which Mr. Leland, Mr. Groome and others are taken to task. I also send *another* copy of the *Scottish People and Press and the Gipsies, etc.* (3 pp., February 10, 1891).

In a letter which I sent on the 17th inst. to a gentleman in London, not connected with the press so far as I know, I said:—

"It seems to be nothing less than a 'scandal to humanity' that a race should exist in the midst of British people in the manner explained. It should at least be acknowledged and respected, whether the non-Gipsy element should associate or marry with the Gipsy one or not, as is the case with Africans in the United States of America. Beyond this I have no purpose to serve. You will please make whatever use of this letter you like."

I would further remark that I hope you will construe my present action in the same spirit in which it was conceived.

J. S.

The *Athenæum* does not flatter me when it connects me with the Rev. John Brown of Bedford in relation to the question, "Who was John Bunyan?" The *native* hypothesis must have poor support if it relies on him, and him exclusively. His *theory* is merely that because *Bunyans* and *Browns* existed in England long before the arrival of the *Gipsies*, there can be no Gipsies of these names, or any other *native* names! (In the United States we have Africans exclusively of European names.) The truth is that Mr. Brown apparently was, and is yet, totally ignorant of the subject of the Gipsies; and has utterly disregarded everything that John Bunyan said he was and was not, and all that bears in any way on the subject. When I saw him in New York in 1882, on an invitation to call on him, I spoke very plainly to him, and sent him a copy of everything I published on the question after that (and, I think, something before it); so that he became without excuse in misleading the world in regard to the immortal dreamer, on what has such an important bearing on the Gipsy race generally, as I have elaborately shown on many occasions. And yet Mr. Brown's rural-clerical *ex cathedrâ* yet meaningless assertions have been adopted by several persons and publications—like the blind following the blind—which greatly complicates the question as a *public* one. Among his "meaningless assertions" are these: that I have "nothing to go upon but Bunyan's own words," and have not "adduced a single shred of historic evidence to support my statement"; that *he* has "settled the question forever," while I am "possessed by a harmless craze."

I find that I have room only for the following extract from my *Contributions to Natural History and Papers on other Subjects* (2d edition, 1880), on the *Endowment of Research*, in illustration of "the great difficulty to be encountered" alluded to in the *Letter addressed to a gentleman in England*:—

"Nor could it be almost imagined that . . . . any question that is actionable should be denied even a hearing by a competent court, on the plea of favouring the defendant . . . . or to gratify popular prejudices against a suit that is legal and moral in its nature. The same may be said of the laws and courts of *criticism*, for if they are in a sound state they will at once entertain, discuss and settle any and every question suitable to the journals before which it is brought. It is unquestionably within their spheres to entertain *demurrers* . . . . to the extent at least that no one can be allowed to make assertions . . . . after they have been repeatedly denied, with proofs of denial, or arguments showing them to be untenable or highly improbable. They should also see that no denial or assertion is permitted unless it is accompanied by evidence or an argument in its favour" (p. 204).

I am uncer ain whether the article on *John Bunyan* has appeared, or may yet appear, in the *Athenæum*.

J. S.

NEW YORK, June 10, 1891.

ANDREW LANG A GIPSY.

HIS SIRES WERE SCOTTISH TINKER LADDIES.

ANDREW LANG, the English literary Ward McAllister, is by descent a Scottish Gipsy; and his not very remote ancestors tramped through the "Land o' Cakes," mending tins, telling fortunes, and not improbably purloining chickens. It is a point in Lang's favour that he is not ashamed of this, as is shown by one of his recent verses:—

"Ye wanderers that were my sires,
Who read men's fortunes in the hand,
Who voyaged with your smithy fires
From waste to waste across the land,

"Why did you leave for garth and town,
Your life by heath and river's brink,
Why lay your Gipsy freedom down,
And doom your child to Pen and Ink?"

Philadelphia Press, July 10, 1892.

I NOTICED in the *Press*, of the 10th July, that its editor makes this assertion, but I have not seen *elsewhere* the lines in which Mr. Lang is said to have admitted it. It is not unlikely that he is "a member of the Gipsy tribe," for there are such of every imaginable mixture of blood, and in every position in life; originating from the arrival of the race in Scotland in or about 15c6. Thus when a very respectable Scotchman (in America) said to me, "I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family," he did not surprise me, for all I said in reply was, that "there are plenty of them."

There is this peculiarity about Mr. Lang, that in the *Edinburgh Weekly Scotsman*, of the 28th December, 1889, he wrote on the question, "Was John Bunyan a Gipsy?" (without even alluding to it), as follows:—

"Almost everybody knows the main facts of Bunyan's life. They may not know that he was of Norman descent (as Mr. Brown seems to succeed in proving), nor that the Bunyans came over with the Conqueror. But they did apparently. They lost their lands in process of time and change, and Bunyan's father was a tinker. He preferred to call himself a brazier."

In reply I wrote, in a pamphlet entitled *The Scottish Press and the Gipsies* (1890), (and sent Mr. Lang a copy of it): "Mr. Lang has some doubts about Mr. Brown's Norman theory of Bunyan's descent, as he uses the words 'seems' and 'apparently,' as if he had been 'hedging' in the matter." I was at a loss to understand how *he* appeared in a question like this, unless it was to throw dust into the eyes of the public. Even Mrs. Carlyle's progenitor, William Baillie, was described in a legal document, in 1725, as a "brazier, commonly called Gipsy." His son Matthew, Mrs. Carlyle's hero—the granduncle of her *maternal* grandmother—went under the name of a "tinkler chief."

I may mention that I edited a MS. of Walter Simson on the Gipsies, written at the suggestion of Sir Walter Scott and William Blackwood, and published it in England (S. Low & Co.), and America, in 1865, making a book of 575 pp.; and I have published on the Gipsies, in larger or shorter treatises, since 1856. I think I should know something practically on the subject, confining my knowledge on it to "three of my senses—seeing, touching, and hearing—and understanding what is said to me."

Whether Mr. Lang is "a member of the Gipsy tribe," I do not know, but I would not be surprised if he is, for as I have said, "there are plenty of them." It is simply a question of "blood and descent and what must *necessarily* accompany these." In the pamphlet alluded to I said: "It is a question whether a *dash* of Gipsy blood does not improve ordinary Scotch people; it is certainly calculated to *put mettle into their heels*. Mrs. Carlyle's Gipsy blood was the best feather in her wing."

What I have written is a sufficient reply to what appeared in the *Philadelphia Press*. I avail myself of this opportunity to add the following:—

On a previous occasion I said of John, son of John and Mary Bunnyon, baptized 16th October, 1679, at Barbadoes: "Had he married a Negress, and his male progeny always done the same, we would now have *to appearance* a Bunyan that is a full-blood Negro." And by converse, had this last married a white, and his male progeny always done the same, we would in time have *to appearance* a full-blood white, and still a Bunyan, especially if the surname had not been changed. In the same way a *native* race *anywhere* can be changed into the *Gipsy* one by the conversion of blood and sentiment. The sentiment

remains with greatly mixed "members of the tribe," while nothing is generally noticed outwardly.

Mrs. Carlyle had her descent through some "sad dogs" on the native side, as generally admitted. But it must not be said by anybody that she had progenitors on the Gipsy side—William Baillie and Rachel Johnstone—even if, like their son Matthew, it could be said of William, in Mrs. Carlyle's language, that he was "a thorough gentleman in his way," or a nobleman for that matter.

It would be interesting to know exactly what Mrs. Carlyle admitted about her Gipsy descent, and on what occasions, and to whom, and under what circumstances; and what were her feelings in regard to it. In the *Life and Writings of Anne Gilchrist*, allusion is made to her reading "a satirical poem on one Captain —— [Baillie], a noted Border robber of horses, from whom Mrs. Carlyle claims collateral descent [from Matthew, son of William] with some pride, as from a remarkable man, a kind of eighteenth century Rob Roy. Carlyle read the poem with some sly satisfaction over his wife" (p. 82). Cannot this poem be found and printed? Carlyle was *mum* on this subject from first to last; and so was Mr. Froude on Mrs. Carlyle, as well as on John Bunyan when treated by him.

Who are of "Gipsy blood and descent, and what must *necessarily* accompany these," are known only to Heaven and themselves. And since "we cannot generally *outwardly* distinguish among the Scotch who are and who are not of Gipsy blood—there being a doubt in regard to *all* their pedigrees—it should follow that all of Gipsy descent, blood and feeling (since 1506) should be acknowledged, and thus made honest Scotch men and women." And the same can be said of many of the Gipsies, or of their offshoots, in other countries. This is a very important question for the consideration of humanity at large, were it only to reconcile to it "a great variety of out-door members of the tribe—originally a tented robber race, proscribed by law and society, and never acknowledged—that are not by any means *all* honest members of society"; but rather at war with it, with their "sense of tribe and soul of nationality, and grips, signs and passwords or language."

For many reasons, which I need not re-state, I can easily understand the Rev. John Brown of Bedford refusing to admit, or even consider, the question, "Was John Bunyan (like many others) a member of the Gipsy tribe?" (while he ignored what Bunyan himself said he was and was not), for that would be neither conventional nor respectable; but very respectable to claim that "his people came in with William the Conqueror." Even the *Athenæum*, of the 21st March, 1891, had the following: "James Bownian, 'an Egiptian rogue,' whose son Nicholas was baptized at Launceston on the 4th March, 1586." The famous John Bunyan was baptized at Elstow on the 30th November, 1628. As all British and Irish Gipsies have native names, it is frequently impossible to tell "which were which," unless regard is had for the special circumstances in each case; as in John Bunyan's, which were conclusive against his being a full-blood *native* Englishman, and as conclusive in favour of his being a Gipsy of mixed, that is, partly of English blood, perhaps of Norman descent.

As I have said, I felt puzzled to understand how Mr. Andrew Lang should encourage Mr. Brown in the way he did, in spite of the overwhelming evidence, direct and circumstantial, to the contrary, in the important matter at issue, in regard to John Bunyan personally, and in its bearing on the Gipsy question generally. Whatever Mr. Lang may be in other respects, on *this* occasion he showed that he was not a man with a "long head, a sound head, and a solid judgment."

It is a little discouraging to find in Scotland or anywhere, in regard to this subject, that there are "great difficulties in the way of disinterested and intelligent people understanding it, and believing in it, and taking an interest in it, and treating it with justice, for it involves the simple idea of the connection between a recently imported oriental tented barbarous race of great mystery and antiquity, and its descendants, of mixed blood, in a more or less advanced stage of development." The light in which other people look on their ancestors, is the light in which people of Gipsy blood and feeling look on theirs—originally or *representatively* from the "tent and roads," and of comparatively recent appearance in Western Europe; which circumstances

distinguish them from the rest of the population, who cannot tell who *they* were *originally*.

On a former occasion I wrote thus: "Hence the natural feeling on the part of the Gipsies for their origin, tribe and language *pulled* very strongly in that direction; while the prejudice of the natives *pushed* them from them in the same direction. The result has been two currents in society, or a double nationality—the Gipsy one and the ordinary one of the country. A *complete* amalgamation with the natives, so that the Gipsy element and feeling would disappear, was thus in the nature of things impossible."

The Gipsy element being such by the laws of nature, the tribe can never divest themselves of their Gipsy blood and feelings; nor have they any wish to do it, if they could. I said on a former occasion that the "sensation in the minds of the Gipsies of the perpetuity of their race creates, in a great measure, its immortality"; and that "all the circumstances connected with its history have cast a fascination over the mind of every one more or less belonging or related to it."

The only way in which Gipsy blood and feelings can possibly be lost is when "one of the tribe" marries an ordinary native, and the issue never hear of the subject of the Gipsies in any way, or even suspect it; when they would *not* be Gipsies, yet still have some Gipsy blood. On the other hand, the tribe increases by such marriages, when nature is allowed to have its way.

Under any circumstances, Gipsies are nothing if not secretive. After the blood, as it became mixed, had literally *stolen* into settled and respectable life, it had to be still more "silent, secret and sly." In this respect I said on another occasion: "After all, the beauty and pleasure in being a Gipsy is to have the other cast of features and colour [not the original ones]; he has as much of the blood and language as the other, while he can go into any kind of company—a sort of Jack-the-giant-killer in his invisible coat," and wonder whether others of the tribe may be present. "Such a Gipsy will leave Edinburgh, for example, and travel over the South of Scotland, 'casting his sign' as he passes through the villages, in every one of which he will find Gipsies."

So "silent, secret and sly" has the race been, that it has managed to throw around themselves, in the minds of others, a sense of their non-existence, apart from the tented stock, or what are popularly understood to be Gipsies. In this way the world has been kept in such ignorance of the subject as to doubt its existence, and, contrary to all reason, to deny it! making it exceedingly difficult to get it, with its limited faculties and sympathies, to do anything in the matter. To Scotchmen it seems strange that this subject, which has been "under their noses" for nearly four centuries, should be unknown to them, while the race "sometimes threads its way, by marriage, through native families, and maintains its identity in a more or less mixed state, in the world"; so that a native Scotchman may have a colony of "the tribe" in his own house, and yet not know of it, by having, when marrying, stumbled over an Egyptian woman. In the meantime "the subject has become like a substance hermetically sealed from the public, which retains its inherent qualities undiminished when kept in that position."

It cannot be said that the prejudice alluded to is applied to other Gipsies than those of the old stock, for the question has never been tested. This has been my endeavour for the last thirty-six years; a long time in one's life, but a very short one—such is the nature of humanity—for the accomplishment of the object in view. What I have written may be my valedictory on this subject, which illustrates the "reign of law," by a rigid *practical* logic, and anthropology or ethnology on its legs. JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, *August* 10, 1892.

P. S. Any one may use the above in an honourable way, with some little acknowledgment of it. J. S.

THE SCOTTISH PRESS AND THE GIPSIES.

I.

WHEN speaking of the Gipsies I have said elsewhere that as "a Scotch subject of such long standing it should interest Scotch people of various kinds." And it may well be called "a Scotch subject," when the "existence of this race in Scotland is based on the evidence of Scotch kings' letters, and acts and writs of the Scots' parliament, the records of courts, and national and local tradition from 1506 downwards." And further, that "by the evidence of 'three of the senses and the understanding' it can be ascertained that the descendants of the wild stock exist, and cannot cease to exist, as Gipsies of various mixtures of blood and in many positions in life."

The feeling on the part of the world towards the Gipsies, *so far as they are known*, is such that the humblest native will say that he "would as soon take a toad to his bosom as marry a tinkler"—the name by which the race in Scotland is exclusively known. This is illustrated by the fact that "should such a Gipsy be permitted to enter the dwelling of a native the most he will let him come in contact with will be the chair he will give him to sit on, and the dish and spoon out of which he will feed him; all of which can again be cleaned"

This eastern tented tribe, arriving in Scotland about 1506, when the natives were almost entirely uneducated, and very far from being completely civilized, were of very swarthy hue and black eyes. In that respect Baron Hume on the criminal laws of Scotland thought that the black eyes should make part of the evidence in proving a person to be of the Gipsy race, with reference to the "perpetual law" of 1609, in which "it should be lawful to condemn and execute them to the death upon proof made of the single fact 'that they are called, known, repute and holden Egyptians.'" So far from this law ever having been repealed we find in the cases of McDonald and his brother-in-law Jamieson, two Gipsy chiefs hanged at Linlithgow in 1770, that their being "called, known, repute, and holden Egyptians" made part of the indictment; a charge well founded, as both of them spoke the "right Egyptian language."

Under the many laws passed against the Gipsies long before the *perpetual* one of 1609, we can easily believe that the use of their language and many other peculiarities, as those of a robber tribe, were kept secret. But after 1609 the admission of their being Gipsies would be rigidly avoided, and everything done to prevent it being even thought, and especially proved, that they were "members of the tribe," except when they were among natives in country places that were friendly to them, from the use they were to them in many ways, and from being afraid of them, as well as from feelings of common humanity. Besides, the Borderers and Highlanders, themselves plunderers and thieves, denounced in common with the Gipsies, would not be very active in apprehending their brother thieves, the Gipsies, but rather befriend them, and share in the spoils of the principal chiefs under the high-sounding titles of kings, dukes, earls, peers, captains, etc. Even, according to Holinshed, "the poison of theft and robbery pervaded almost all classes of the Scottish community about this period." But the Gipsies being foreigners, and differing in their appearance and in many other ways from the rest of the community, and apparently, that is, outwardly, so far as they were known, incorrigible, they *remained* in popular estimation the only legally and socially proscribed part of the Scottish community. And none, owing to these reasons, daring to avow their being "members of the tribe," the race never got the credit or benefit of any good that sprung from it in any way.

Walter Simson, whose researches, made at the suggestion of Sir Walter Scott and William Blackwood, edited by me and published by Sampson Low & Co. in 1865 (575 pp.), gave many instances illustrative of the legal and social proscription mentioned. He said that one Gipsy told him that he had wrought all his life in a shop with fellow tradesmen and that not one of them ever discovered that he knew a single Gipsy word. And he described how two Gipsy women would almost have submitted to be murdered than explained the meaning in English of two Gipsy words, to appease enraged colliers—*shaucha* and *blawkie*, broth and pot—which the colliers imagined were applied to them in derision, as *Sauchie Blackies*—for the reason, as they said, that "it would have exposed our tribe and made ourselves odious to the world." Another stated that "the public would look upon her with horror and contempt were it known she could speak the Gipsy language." He gave many instances in which the outdoor Gipsies, when after much difficulty they were prevailed on to avow themselves as such, acted in this way:—"These poor people were

much alarmed when I let them see that I knew they were Gipsies. They thought I was despising them and treating them with contempt; or they were afraid of being apprehended under the old sanguinary laws condemning the whole unfortunate race to death, for the Gipsies, as I have already said, still believe that these bloody statutes are in full force against them at the present day."—"She also mentioned that the Gipsies believe that the laws which were enacted for their extirpation were yet in full force against them. I may mention, however, that she could put confidence in the family in whose house she made these confessions."

II.

THERE seems to be a great difficulty on the part of some people to understand how others can be Gipsies unless they look and live like what are popularly understood to be such. All that I have ever been able to learn from Scotland, in that respect, came in answer to a personal inquiry, that "intelligent people in Edinburgh do not deny that there are many people amongst them who are of Gipsy blood, and are aware of it, but they do not believe that these are Gipsies." And further, that the idea of their being Gipsies is "incredible, perhaps impossible, and contrary to what is seen in the world." They "cannot believe in such a thing, and do not believe it possible, and consequently decline to entertain the subject for want of proof."—*Blackwood's Magazine* for May, 1866, in anything but a friendly spirit, spoke of my information on this subject as "wild speculations and unsupported assertions."—*All the Year Round* for March 17th of the same year, in a very friendly tone, wished to be excused if it "somewhat doubted the accuracy of statements which cannot be proved by any modern methods known to us." These are very interesting admissions, which justify the assertion that this subject has, as it were, to be 'raised from the dead."

I said elsewhere that "it is natural to suppose that since 1506—nearly four centuries ago—there should be a great change in the position, condition, and character of the Gipsy race in Scotland"; and that "promiscuous people, knowing nothing about it, can have no interest in it until they are taught and trained to understand it, and believe in it, and take an interest in it, and do justice to it." If people in Edinburgh admit that there "are many amongst them who are of Gipsy blood and are aware of it," why do they boggle at admitting them to be of the Gipsy *race*, irrespective of characters and habits? There is no *special* mystery about the perpetuation of an ordinary native family or clan, whatever *outside* blood it may draw into it: why should it be so with the perpetuation of the Gipsy one? "I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family" (whatever it may *always* imply), is what any native Scotchman should easily understand and admit; as well as that in intermarriages the Gipsy feeling follows the Gipsy blood, both of which, as such, have never been acknowledged by the rest of the population, under almost any circumstances, and by the laws of nature unavoidably make people what they are,—that is, "members of the Gipsy tribe."

It is a long stretch to go back to 1506, since which time it is impossible to say to-day where, or under what circumstances, Gipsy blood and feeling are *not* to be found. It was well known in Edinburgh in 184– that the Rev. Dr. Robert Gordon, of the High Church there, frequently admitted that he was a Gipsy; while Mrs. Carlyle and her uncle, the merchant at Liverpool, admitted that a member of their family or tribe was the original of Sir Walter Scott's Meg Merrilies. That led me to *suggest* that even Francis Jeffrey and John Wilson *might* say that *theirs* were "Gipsy families," as mentioned in *The Gipsies as illustrated by John Bunyan, Mrs. Carlyle and others* (Maclachlan and Stewart, 1883). The possession of very little of "the blood" creates the phenomenon, as illustrated at great length in my *Disquisition* attached to the *History of the Gipsies*. And any intelligent and *candid* person, with "half an eye," can easily conclude that John Bunyan, from what he told us, was a Gipsy of mixed blood, apparently from a native ancestor, some time after 1506, having married a Gipsy. And yet even in America I found an editor who declined an article on that subject for the reason that it might damage his magazine to the extent of a thousand dollars! I am not aware that the idea has even been entertained in a British publication in any form. That is not calculated to induce people of Gipsy blood and feeling to acknowledge themselves.

There is no more reason for saying that the Gipsy race has been "merged and lost" in the native one than that an ordinary Scot is "merged and lost" in another one; or that either has "ceased to be" such by a "change of habits." The truth is that much of the native blood has been "merged" (but not

"lost") in the Gipsy one, adding greatly to the number of "the tribe." And the tribe prides itself in saying that they are not *common* Scotch, but Scotch on a Gipsy foundation, or Gipsy on a Scotch foundation, or Scoto-Egyptians. And although none of "the blood," as such, fought with Wallace and Bruce, it can yet join in "Scots wha hae" through their native blood; like Mrs. Carlyle, who descended through John Knox, and William Baillie, a splendid Gipsy chief (of mixed blood), slain by another Gipsy in 1724,—the father of her hero, Matthew Baillie, "a thorough gentleman in his way," as she so affectionately described him; her Gipsy blood and feeling, like oil in water, coming to the top, as by a law of nature they must necessarily do.—It seems to be too much like "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" to say that these people should be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens," even "with the saints, and of the household of God." *Eph. ii.* 19.

In 1871 I addressed a communication to the Scottish Clergy on the "Social emancipation of the Gipsies"—to be found in *Contributions to Natural History, etc.* (1875), p. 156, and in *The Scottish Churches and the Gipsies* (1881), p. 33 (Maclachlan and Stewart)—under the impression that they should and would do something in this matter. In that I said:—"To show you how the ideas of society change, I may remind you that not long ago none but such as led about bears, monkeys and raccoons would dare to wear beards and mustaches; but that soon thereafter they became fashionable among all kinds of people, not excepting grave and reverend clergymen." And so recently as the 17th April, 1891, I addressed a gentleman in England thus:—"It seems to be nothing less than a 'scandal to humanity' that a race [amounting to hundreds of thousands] should exist in the midst of British people in the manner explained. It should at least be acknowledged and respected, whether the non-Gipsy element should associate or marry with the Gipsy one or not." Indeed, the two races have got so mixed that *outwardly* it is generally impossible to tell the one from the other, for, as I have said above, they are *both* Scotch. For this reason there is nothing in the nature of things to prevent people of Gipsy blood and feeling from openly acknowledging themselves to each other, and even to the public generally; and our seeing "Scottish Gipsy Societies," after the fashion of the day.

The subject at issue, besides applying to the Gipsies generally, everywhere, is specially intended for the action of the Scottish press, for it to do justice to *their fellow-countrymen of Gipsy blood and feeling.* There is undoubtedly a feeling of caste to be overcome; but with discussion and time that will sooner or later (and perhaps very soon) disappear, especially when people of respectability are included in those mentioned. Then there is the natural aversion to receive new truths of any kind, and especially when opposed to deep-rooted beliefs of nearly four centuries' standing, separated from positive knowledge on the part of some appealed to, of limited faculties, sympathies and training. The only practical remedy seems to be discussion, so that the subject, if it does not assume the form of positive inquiry and evidence at first, will resemble an idea floating in the air, and gradually become a matter of positive knowledge and belief, like everything that has ever been discovered and established.

For this reason the Scottish press (as well as any other that chooses) may copy this article, or make whatever honourable use of it that may be deemed fit.

JAMES SIMSON.

NEW YORK, March 4, 1893.

P. T. O.

As an APPENDIX or POSTSCRIPT to the preceding ARTICLE, I give a copy of a letter, of the 24th December, 1884, to a gentleman in Scotland, in illustration of the first paragraph of the second part of it :—

Many thanks for your letter of the 11th, which confirmed my impression that what I have published in regard to the Gipsies was not believed by the people of Scotland. That appears to me very singular, the more especially after you say that they "do not deny that there are many people amongst us who are of Gipsy blood, and are aware of it." That surely is more than half of the battle. To illustrate this would imply my going over the ground which I have on many occasions done. If people are "aware of being of Gipsy blood," should not that of itself make them "members of the [Gipsy] tribe"? You make allusion to the Huguenots [about their having been "lost" in the general population]. If you will turn to the *History of the Gipsies*, pp. 455–7, you will see how I anticipated the objection under that head, in common with the Germans, pp. 454–5, as well as some other [*ordinary*] European people settling in Great Britain [whose race or nationality, as in America, is merely birth and rearing on the soil].

I said in the letter to the Scottish Clergy (1884), in regard to the subject: "That there should be great difficulties in the way of it being investigated, and the facts of it ascertained, is natural enough; but that there should be difficulties in the way of it being understood and treated with justice, after being investigated and ascertained, is surprising, for it is very simple in its nature." And in the one to the English Clergy (1884), ['on the feeling of caste,' 'the most difficult thing to grapple with']: "The remedy in this case seems to be discussion, accompanied by the publicly-expressed belief of people whose opinions are apt to influence others."

This objection to [investigation and] discussion is at the bottom of the matter, showing that people are not willing to even entertain the question. This appears very discreditable to modern Scotchmen, as fully explained in the appendix to my *Reminiscences of Childhood at Inverkeithing, or Life at a Lazaretto*, pp. 77–8, (Maclachlan and Stewart, 1882, pp. 87). I had no difficulty in understanding this subject, even with having almost everything to find out; so that others should be able to do it, with everything explained to them. It seems to me that candid, thoughtful, and intelligent people should see that this race, which originally "followed the tent," is represented by those that sprung or are descended from it; and that there is nothing odd in the assertion that there is a large body of people in every relation of life in Great Britain, and the world generally, that belong to the [Gipsy] race; and that nothing whatever interferes, or can interfere, with that fact.

Of all the people in the world, the Scotch, with their ideas in regard to "folk," as I have said on many occasions, are those who should the most easily understand what I have published on the subject, provided that they prove true to themselves, that is, be candid, attentive to what is told them, and show a disposition to understand what I have published on the subject, and do justice to it. If Scotchmen in general know whot ey are, surely the [Scottish] Gipsies can do the same, as illustrated by the admission of one of them—"I am one myself, for ours is a Gipsy family."

In the face of all that the great minds of the past have left us on the subjects of philosophy, history, and what not, it seems strange that at the present day it should be advanced that a person's not knowing of the existence of a subject is a proof of its non-existence; and that things have no existence beca e their existence has not been proved [or even discovered] by some one. It is also very singular that it should be said that I have not proved what I have shown to be facts to my own knowledge, or of those who will examine them.

I am at a loss to understand you when you say that there is no prejudice against Gipsy blood, in the face of the legal and social proscription of the race everywhere, although the legal one in Great Britain [so far as *the blood* is concerned] has long ceased to exist. The social prejudice really constitutes, for the most part [if not altogether], the question at issue. In the latter part of your letter you confounded the prejudice against the name [of Gipsy] with the one relating to a [native] person rising from the ranks; these being two distinct questions —that of a race that is radically distinct [however mixed as regards blood] from the native one, and a position in society peculiar to the ordinary natives of the soil [although both were born and reared on it]. As I have already said, I am on this question apt to "go over the ground which I have on many occasions done"; and so I will conclude by saying that I will be glad to hear again from you on the subject. I repeat that the way in which what I have published has been treated, is "very discreditable to modern Scotchmen" [in common with "the rest of mankind."]

J. S.