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"Carthago Delenda Est."

The Honorable Bird S. Coler, for twelve years Commissioner of Public Welfare in New York, has given a very sound answer to Bertram Russell's false philosophy of marriage. From his book, "He Made Them Twain," we take the following excellent commentary on the dry-rot that brought about the downfall of Carthage:

"As wealth and luxury increased among these people, a looser system of sex morality became prevalent. I do not know whether gods were invented, but it is certain that the gods and goddesses of antiquity became the patrons in opulent and powerful Carthage of strange practices. These folks had been in the beginning a monogamous people; the family had been the foundation of the state, but in the wild license that followed the accumulation of wealth, "companionism" became the order of the ruling classes and children were sacrificed. One authority says:

"Of their religion, we know from Scripture and from more recent history that it was a cruel and bloody superstition. They worshipped on high places and they had sacred groves as well as idols, which were held in abomination by the true followers and subjects of the Jewish theocracy, and which were yet constantly owned as gods, frequented and worshipped by the backsliders, both of the princes and people of Israel. The principal one was Baal, Belsamen, or the ancient one Moloch, as he was called by the Jewish rabbinical writers; he was considered by the Greeks as identical with Kronos or Saturn, and in the processes of time became in some features assimilated to Apollo. He was evidently the fire god or sun god, and to him were offered the human sacrifices, of children more especially, who were placed on the extended arms of the metallic statue whence they rolled into a fiery furnace. To the sun god was associated a female deity, expressive, it is believed, of the productive power of Nature under the generative power of the sun, worshipped as the queen of the heavens, Ashtoreth, or Astarte, who is identical with the Venus Miletta of Babylon, the Aviatis of Armenia, and the Venus Urania of Cyprus, whose rites were as distinct a feature as was the fiery death the head and front of the male deity."

"In the processes of time." In other words, when the Phoenician started to till and toil on Africa's northern verge, they were men and women of sobriety and monogamy, and their gods were probably symbols of respectable attributes; but with luxury and license and lust and concubinage, or, to use the modern term, "companionism," came an attribution to the tribal deities of less respectable attributes, until they assumed all the vile characteristics of the rich and profligate aristocracy..... Contraception was not then the fashion, so the Carthaginian form was to throw infants to the fiery Moloch.

"All this did not occur without protest from some of the conservatives of Carthage. The soldier caste, the Barcas and their friends, were too strong and stern to regard with complacency a system of social life which they knew was far more destructive of their state than the arms of the Roman. Hamilcar pleaded with his people for sobriety and decency of life; his great son, Hannibal, scorned the degraded children of the corrupted "companionist" city, and recruited the armies with which he was to invade Italy from the hardy monogamous tribes of tributary Spain. They had not corrupted their blood and made their souls feeble by the ancient and dishonorable practise of "companionism."

"No power could save such a state: not its vast army, not its few splendid generals, not its tremendous wealth. 'Carthago delenda est!' was written in the lives of the Carthaginians before Cato uttered the phrase in the Roman Senate. Carthage fell, and few civilizations in all history have so utterly vanished as that of this once proud state. Dr. Arnold tells us that although her billowing sails once whitened the waters of every sea, and her colonies once planted the shores of every land, hospitable or inhospitable, no relic of her laws, her language or her blood now appears upon the earth.