

NATIONAL LIFE.

'Yours is not a Religion, it is the sect of men who have forgotten their origin, forgotten the battles which their fathers fought against a corrupt society, and the victories they gained in transforming the world which you depise, oh men of contemplation! The first real, earnest religious Faith that shall arise upon the ruins of the old worn-out creeds, will transform the whole of our actual social organisation, because every strong and earnest faith tends to apply itself to every branch of human activity; because in every epoch of its existence, the *Earth* has ever tended to conform itself to the Heaven in which it then believed, and because the whole history of Humanity is but the repetition—in form and degree varying according to the diversity of the times—of the words of the Dominical Christian Prayer: *Thy Kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven.*'—JOSEPH MAZZINI, *The Duties of Man.* p. 43.

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‘All societies of men, whether we call them states or churches, should make their bond to consist in a common object and a common practice, rather than in a common belief; in other words, their end should be good rather than truth. We may consent to act together, but we cannot consent to believe together; many motives may persuade us to the one; we may like the object, or we may like our company, or we may think it safest to join them, or most convenient, and any one of these motives is quite sufficient to induce unity of action, action being a thing in our own power. But no motives can persuade us to believe together; we may wish a statement to be true, we may admire those who believe it, we may find it very inconvenient not to believe it; all this helps us nothing; unless our own mind is freely convinced that the statement or doctrine be true, we cannot by possibility believe it. That union in action will in the end lead very often to union of belief is most true; but we cannot insure its doing so; and the social bond cannot directly require for its perfectness more than union of action. It cannot properly require more than it is in the power of men to give; and men can submit their actions to a common law at their own choice, but their internal convictions they cannot.’—DR. ARNOLD’S *Lectures on Modern History*, pp. 39-40.



NATIONAL LIFE.

IF the earth with its inhabitants be a fortuitous aggregation of atoms, it must be at once admitted that individualism is the law of life, and that it is useless and idle to look beyond ourselves: we have no concern with a future of which we are not to form a part, and have no motive to deny the gratification of the present, if that present define the limit of our hopes and desires. As an individual, man is simply an animal; it is the relation to another which is the basis of all duty, the ground of knowledge, the incentive to action. The study of the relations of men is the science of Society; and when we think of diversities of government, of laws, of religions, of climate, we feel at once the complexity of the phenomena, and the difficulty of deducing with accuracy the principles which underlie the social structure. Society is not a mechanical arrangement; it is an organization composed of living forces, creating, by its activity, new conditions, which

generate modifications in every science, and in the very framework of life. 'Unhasting, unresting,' is the motto blazoned in the great Temple, where there are neither priests nor creeds; and it does not rest with any man or any class of men to set aside this dictum.

National life is the result of co-operation, of sacrifice, of restraint; it is the union of mixed elements for a higher purpose than this common life. It is the glorification of Humanity; and it has, in every age, held up as an ideal nobler aims and grander motives than are possible to any but a small minority of educated minds. It is only when an action or a scheme has a reference to the many that either is of significance. The history of men of genius is treasured because we feel that they are the property of all men. The Poet and the Philosopher penetrate the outer surface, and explore that common nature which is the heritage of all. The artist will never win renown from painting the trim parterre, but by presenting those common features of earth and sky with which all are familiar. The basis of all art, and all religion, and all philosophy, is in the general life—and the highest thing in the world is Humanity; it is above rank or culture, it is the living principle of existence, and for it everything besides exists. It is a living, present inspiration, which opens up the fountains of truth, and with resistless impetus bears each generation onward.

The highest object for which individuals toil and travail is the revelation of Humanity, and national life is a chapter in the volume of this vast historical record. So long as men desire nothing beyond the satisfaction of physical wants, they cannot rise to national existence; desires beyond themselves, the recognition of a past, and the sense of a future, draw the bond between man and man closer; the vague shadow of an unknown power superior to himself leads man to infer a Being above all that exists around him, and in some shape or another, the invisible has always exercised a supreme influence over the tangible and the temporal, and all ancient life is full of the wonders performed by supernatural agency. An instinct led men to the worship of something higher than themselves, the imagination created a mythology, and the weakness and dependence of creatures craved aid from the dread unseen; there was no critical philosophy to disturb the pleasant illusion, and the floating legend settled into a myth, and that which was the growth of simplicity and piety passed, in a sophistical and superstitious age, into a systematic theology; interests grew around it, and the voluntary acceptance of its credentials and its origin became superseded by a coercive and compulsory assent, which destroyed growth, and rendered conviction impossible.

The dominion of the gods at Athens turned to decay from the moment that their supremacy was inconsist-

ent with the teaching of Socrates. The majority of orthodox Englishmen would highly commend the protest of Socrates, and in this way the study of human progress in other times and countries becomes rich in instruction for us, and the judgment is freer in dealing with the problems of politics when separated from the partisanship of the present. The French Revolutionists learnt their politics from Plutarch, and the Puritans of the Civil Wars from the Old Testament. Time hallows the memories which we commit to its keeping, and restores them brighter with the centuries; if they perish in its charge, it is because they are thin and narrow, not broad and human; they are evanescent and superficial, and cannot resist the light and the heat which come with the growing hours.

Individual life is the type of national life, and is born of suffering and trial. Egypt, the Wilderness, and the struggles with the 'dwellers in the land,' formed the Jews into a nation—their religion and their poetry, and above all their character, grew in the process. The Persian invasion of Greece aroused an enthusiasm which purged away the baser elements, which overcame the invaders, which awoke the latent capacities for thinking and acting, and supplied materials for history and poetry. Prosperous traders, successful breeders of cattle, as such, occupy a small place in the world's history. Jacob is not interesting

to us on account of his craftiness in his dealings with Laban—his wealth-gathering is the flaw; his name has come down to us from his place as one in the succession of tradition, as a witness for truths which have a permanent value, as the type of spiritual life, looking beyond the present, and trusting in a power more than flesh. If Jacob had continued as an owner of flocks only, we should never have heard either his name or his story; but he is worked into the history of the world, and his love for Rachel, and his sorrow for Joseph, will live as illustrations of human feeling, connecting the present with the far past, and proving the kinship of humanity.

The surrender of mere personal and private interests, which public exigencies involve, raises men out of the selfishness and sordidness of traffic, and gives them a notion of a communion, broader and wider than that of any material advantage. Life, in an early stage, must be absorbed by supplying the needs of the body; but in the human economy a few rise to the top, the sense of superiority begets a desire for dignity, his needs outrun the back and the stomach, the ornament of life becomes a necessity, leisure falls to the lot of a class; not required to work with their hands, they work with their minds, they rise gradually to general ideas, they conceive of a condition of society, they recognise their own strength, they form an aristo-

crazy, and conclude that the many ought to labour for the few. The hordes of human beings in the East, which for ages have patiently bowed the knee to despotism, form a stage in human development ; they bore the brunt of the battle, and have lived and cherished a civilisation and religions to which the European mind is strange. Before Judaism or Christianity was heard of, the Hindoo speculated on the profound problems of life. Humanity is not of yesterday, and countless ages elapsed before men rose to the notion of mind or spirit, of God or of a future. The discipline has been varied and severe. Born into the world naked like an animal, he groped his way, starting from a point compared with which the rude Briton or Saxon of the fifth century was civilized and enlightened. He fought with Nature, which he strove to appease and bribe ; as he did not understand the phenomena around him, he deified Nature under all the forms of its manifestation, and instead of using and subordinating the forces of the physical world, he worshipped them. Worship is a necessity, and therefore in a low state the worship of the highest good, infinite and immaterial, was an impossibility ; in that low state men did what we do—worshipped the highest thing they could conceive of. But this worship has in all ages tended to force upon men the idea of unity ; as we worship a common object we get the conception of a common interest,

and religion has in the past been a bond of cohesion between men. Religion now, and for centuries past, has not had this effect, the reason being that it is not in harmony with the stage of progress which humanity has reached.

The continual tendency of an aristocracy is towards exclusiveness, therefore an aristocratic system of society cannot be admitted to be favourable to the growth and perfection of Humanity. Aristocracy may, and generally does, make way for Royalty, but the falseness and pretentiousness of the 'divinity that doth hedge a king' is inconsistent with enlightened opinion; it is a remnant of barbarism, and although a less potent element of evil to human progress than an aristocracy, is quite irreconcilable with an advanced rule of reason. A sacerdotal rule is out of the region of argument; but sacerdotalism, although fallen from its lofty pedestal, still exercises a mighty influence in human affairs, and an influence, in its most modified form, hostile to human right, to national unity, to intellectual progress. All assumption of knowledge, or goodness, as the privilege of a caste, or a race, or a sect, is treason to truth, is antagonistic to growth. Growth is the law of life; we are blind creatures, and when we attempt to set a limit to the impulses which drive forward society, we assume the prerogative of infinite intelligence; it is common to do so on the ground of humility, but the term is misapplied—the assump-

tion of the right to raise a bar against marching forward, proceeds either from insane ignorance or hopeless infidelity. There is a natural aristocracy which has ruled, and will continue to rule, the affairs of nations. The men who do the highest work of their age are a divine order, and it is curious to reflect upon the little paltry imitation we make of the divine work, in the ordering of the human economy. Nature gives us a Moses or a Solon—we elect a George the First; the order of events throws to the top Oliver Cromwell—we grumble, conspire, revile him, and when he departs we become intoxicated with loyalty for Charles the Second. There is a real aristocracy in every great nation—those who are loyal to the national life, who are proud of its traditions, who are free from the egotism of ascribing all honour to the present, who know that they are bound to the past by battles in the field, on the sea, in the senate, in the press, in the hall of justice; who keep a calendar in their heads of the famous names who have wrought and suffered for the common weal. This is the best blood of the nation, those who are the inheritors of the feelings and the convictions which have grown with time, and who are proud of the present, as the result and outcome of gradual, orderly progress. A timid conservatism lies at the root of this desire in men to stereotype a class or a creed. Nature, in her 'boundless prodigality,' raises up

those whom we require, and generally for the exigency or emergency which demands exceptional ability. The aristocracies of Spain or France failed to produce a Napoleon—the people breed the heroes, and they enrich the privileged order for a time, and shed a glory, not its own, upon rank and dignity. The honour accorded to genius is a national gain, and helps to raise the level of national life; but the honour lavished upon successful courtiers or tricksters is a national evil, and makes the award of rank valueless and trivial. And it is not to be doubted that the respect and honour of those who are removed from us by ties of relationship or intimacy, whose judgments are unbiassed, is a high distinction, very favourable to virtue, and a grand motive to patriotism and probity; consequently it has been observed that the purest patriotism has been found under republican governments, and that the very high standard of public character attained in England is the result of the influence of public opinion, sifting and winnowing the chaff, and in this respect our government is essentially republican—that is, a great national communion, and not a narrow clique.

The entire past does not supply us with an illustration of any approach to the ideal of a national life, and the reason is obvious. Nations up to the present have not been based upon justice; they have been the creations of temporary necessity, of forced alliance, or

conquest. Selfishness has been the dominant spring of government, and aggrandizement pure and simple has been unhesitatingly put forward as adequate ground for enterprises of war and policy. The attempt of the Persians to enslave Greece was in accordance with the spirit of that age. The history of Rome is a record of wars of aggression and annexation. And the irruptions of the Barbarians who destroyed the outer framework of the Roman Empire were the retribution of Roman tyranny. Exclusiveness was a necessary basis of government when all outside a certain limit were looked upon as barbarians ; a man was less noble than an Athenian, or a Roman ; and as the laws of the progressive intelligence of mankind are universal and not restricted, such a basis must crumble away. Nations, like individuals, fade away, but Humanity is permanent, and the river of life rolls on, bearing us upon its bosom. What is truly human, whether it be Jewish or Roman, does not die, but is gathered into the garner of experience, and becomes the nourishment of Poet and Prophet, yielding fresh leaves and fruit, and is the true volume of inspiration, which no destructive criticism can weaken or destroy.

The golden age does not lie behind, it is the vision of the imagination, it is the dream of the poets, it is the protest of expectancy and desire, outrunning the actual and the present. The consciousness of capa-

bilities marred by untoward events, by the drag-chain of custom, which keeps ordinary minds in bondage, soars away from the commonplace, and seeks a home in the far past. The writer of the Pentateuch imagined an epoch when men attained superhuman longevity,—Homer introduces the gods fighting the battles of mortals, and takes his heroes to the Court of Omnipotence above, and gives an insight into the intrigues of Olympus. No individual has ever realized his ideal, and a nation is not different,—there are moments of enthusiasm when men and nations rise to the fulness of their nature, but the strain cannot be maintained, reaction follows. There were fifty years of Athenian life rich in results, which to us now seem almost fabulous; when statesmen and poets, and sculptors and philosophers, adorned a small State, and have left lessons which our boasted advancement does not surpass; and although they were ignorant of the doctrines and practices which we esteem essential, we have found it necessary to learn their language, to study their polity, and we strive in vain to emulate their mastery of form. The Athenians did not work in vain: we inherit their achievements, we appropriate as much as we can of the legacy; the inspiration of their genius has filtered through song and story, and is a factor in the education of the little boy and girl of every English village. Their history was fragmentary, it

was a flash of light ; but sudden and transient though it was, we may say, '*Better fifty years of Athens than a cycle of Cathay.*' The effort put forth by the Greeks was too violent ; they pointed out the road, but they did not travel far upon it ; but they have helped others, they have been the trainers of Christendom.

National power and permanence attained a marvellous development under Rome ; she subordinated the teachers of Christianity, and by a bold stroke of policy identified the doctrines of the New Testament with the fortunes of the Empire. Priest and monk corrupted and enslaved the minds of their hearers, they prepared the way for the ready reception of every extravagant legend, they made a virtue of ignorance and credulity, they abetted the cruel effeminate tyranny of the Byzantine Court ; and the result of this Christianization of Europe was manifest in the loss of free institutions, in the death of literature and art, in a brutalization of men so hopeless and so profound as to suggest to the people, as the only likely termination and way of escape, the destruction of the world ; and this mad notion fitted in with the fanaticism of the Church.

The golden age is before us, and will not appear as the work of the enchanter's wand,—the progress of knowledge, the adaptation of institutions to the wants of men, the recognition that this is a wisely ordered economy, and not a hopeless failure. Life hitherto has

been too much 'a battle and a march;' we must work for others, we must learn to wait, we must above all conceive of Humanity. The interests of all men must take the place of faction and sect; we must learn to think that the whole past bears upon the entire present, and that the little spot of the world called England, or the larger one called Europe, does not contain all that is known of truth, or of nature. A few people up to the present in civilized countries have in any true sense fulfilled the conception of a rational and worthy life. At the present time, in any European country, the great mass of the people are only a stage beyond mere animals; it is rare in the southern and midland counties of England to find the children of labourers at school over ten years of age; the cottages in which the labouring class live are inconsistent with ordinary decency, the wages earned are inadequate for anything beyond the bare necessities, and yet as a people we sneer at other lands, at their Popery and Paganism. If national greatness be national money-making, we bear the palm; but if not—not.

There can be no national life worthy of the name until the nation in a very strict sense means the body of the people, until simplicity of life enables the workers to take their ground according to their qualifications, and not according to their wealth. No matter what splendour of genius glorifies an age, if it

be confined to the few we must look beyond. 'God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth,' and any system of government which conducts the affairs of a nation in the interests of a class is condemned. National life means the common interests of all. 'God is no respecter of persons,' why should men be? Are our people to drudge like beasts of burden, and are we to go on declaring in our churches and chapels that God is the Universal Father, and yet we decline the acquaintance of a neighbour because he is not rich? And yet the people who do so are orthodox believers in—I must not write Christianity, for the Founder of Christianity was the friend of all men; he rejected the orthodox of his day, he consorted with questionable people—above all, the poor heard him gladly; 'he was the friend of publicans and sinners,' and his name is loved and revered because he was a child of the people, who sympathized with Humanity rather than Pharisaism or Sadduceeism; he was a true democrat, and recognised a brother in a man.

The appreciation of the significance of a man is the test of real spiritual insight. Do you believe in God? reverence his work; and if the picture be obscured with dirt, if the divine do not shine through, think of the selfish neglect which has permitted the costliest works to remain in ruin and decay. The divineness of Humanity must be accepted as a postulate before

we can hope to render it due honour; to be rich or powerful is a small affair, but to be a real man is the highest achievement; that is, to have a wide knowledge, a large heart, an humble disposition, a courageous will, to possess the consciousness that we are one with Humanity; this it is to be a man—to sacrifice all personal interests, to die for the truth and esteem it bliss. We must not judge of the true dignity of men by the hollow exaggeration of the pulpit or the platform; the century in which we live has produced true ‘leaders in the war for the liberation of humanity,’ and if burning or crucifixion were the fashion, there are those amongst us who would go forth to death as gaily as a bride to marriage. We must not think too meanly of the present; there are noble souls in our midst, who would sacrifice life gladly, rather than truth.

The salvation of man is in looking forward, in hoping, and not in despairing. Every day is a revelation, and it is only by entering into the meaning of the vision of the present that we can at all understand the sustained manifestation of truth in the past.* Divine life is a condition, and not an opinion; and the true gospel is unfolded from the multiform life of

* ‘Human improvement is a product of many factors, and no power ever yet constituted among mankind includes them all; even the most beneficent power only contains in itself some of the requisites of good, and the remainder, if progress is to continue, must be derived from some other source.’—J. S. MILL, *Representative Government*, p. 149.

the race, rather than from the exceptional phenomena of an individual or a church. These ideas are working in many minds, and sooner or later they will work out the regeneration of society, by making the individuals fit for a true communion of mutual help. In the past, self-assertion has been the key to distinction; in a true national unity, self-abnegation will be the rule of the highest and purest minds. All this only means that men in a right state will work out the divine order, and abandon their own disorder; they will strive to do the will of the Highest, and have no will of their own separate. We have wills, but not to tyrannize over ourselves or others, but to work out the laws of the world in which we are placed.

Individualism is a phase of life, and has given us heroes, prophets, and apostles; but it is an initiatory phase. Hero-worship is a superstition, and the grandest man is finite, limited, temporary. Mankind is a grander idea than any individual; it includes all the past, the present, and the future. We need not dishonour the memory of any saint or hero, we need not undervalue the work of any age or country—they have all contributed their share to human progress,—but the present is ‘the heir of all the ages,’ and we must do our work in the day. The world is slowly emerging from anarchy, and we now possess an amount of knowledge concerning the course of history, to enable us to trace the method

according to which society has proceeded in its course of evolution. The mass of men have no conception of interests beyond themselves, a few rise to an enlarged view of human affairs through the medium of their own party ; a still smaller section go beyond their sect or party, and extend their vision to national interests ; the former may be denominated zealots, and the latter patriots ; and this is the only way in which men could have been educated for the apprehension of the grand truth of the unity and community of the entire race of man. All modes of civilisation, and every system of religion, have consciously or unconsciously worked to this end. Surely this conception of man's course in the world is more rational and more worthy of the Divine government, than to suppose that a blind fate has coerced human beings into an aimless and accidental struggle for an end of which they are ignorant, and by a series of transformations which own no arrangement, and disclaim all dependence upon the bias of antecedents. It may be, in the opinion of some, more reverent to recognise the Divine hand in the ordering of one people ; I deem it more reverent, and more intelligent, to see God's providence in the teaching and training of every nation, and entire Humanity.

There is a real and true order in human affairs, and the exercise of enlightened faith lies in resting implicitly in the confidence 'that all things work together

for good.' Can anything be more absurd than the supposition that order should prevail in the physical world, and that the sphere of living agents should be relegated to blind chance, or the hobbies of theorists? Individuals and factions have in different ages striven their utmost to contravene the natural tendency and current of history. Egypt, by legislation carried into the minutest detail of life, endeavoured to isolate itself, and, as a consequence, became powerless and effete.* Rome pursued a policy of vigorous rule, of comparative expansiveness, and she exercised an influence which practically has endured to the present. Christianity inherited the traditions of Rome, and rose through their influence to the controlling position of arbiter in Europe for one thousand years. In spite of monkery, the Church has been a source of blessing and of good. We must remember the wreck of society with which it had to deal. Those German barbarians rushed upon Italy like locusts, and ruthlessly destroyed the work of ages. It was a long winter in moral and intellectual life, but life was dormant, not extinct. After a period of suffering—a

* 'It is often said that the irregular and various contour of modern civilisation is due to the exuberant and erratic genius of the Germanic races, and it is often contrasted with the dull routine of the Roman Empire. The truth is, that the Empire bequeathed to modern society the legal conception to which all this irregularity is attributable. If the customs and institutions of barbarians have one characteristic more striking than another, it is their extreme uniformity.'—MAINE, *Ancient Law*, p. 366.

period of awful oppression and cruelty—there came the dawn of a new day ; Humanity asserted itself, industry revived, enterprise created wealth and self-reliance, and the brute force of feudalism yielded to these living forces. Europe was regenerated ; she started on a fresh career, and for hundreds of years modern society has been adapting itself to its changed conditions, and advancing in the path of well-being.

Well-being now, and for the future, must rest upon organized industry ; and the few lofty trees must be cut down, that the undergrowth may get light to flourish. The slightest knowledge of history will convince us that the legislation of the past has been mainly in the interests of the governing classes. Absolute slavery for the great mass was the rule until quite recent times ; but the recognition of the equality of men is even now only faintly admitted, and that in general terms. In England we are awaking to the danger, rather than the duty, of education for the people ; but this indifference will not last long. Obsolete dogmas will be swept aside, and the bigots who are at present prejudicing the claims of rational religion, will possibly live to admit their folly, in the demolition of the whole structure. Christianity, *as a creed*, has been the fierce opponent of enlightenment ; it has resisted every advance in science, and succeeded unhappily in starving the mental growth of millions of people for generations ; and, like the Bourbons, the

religious classes learn nothing. French Revolutions produce no effect upon their minds ; the world advances, but they force their followers to cry out, 'It stands still.' The storm is gathering, and those who have been compelled to stifle conviction, and to suffer for it, will not be inclined much longer to trifle with assertions of infallibility on behalf of decrepit superstitions ; the children of light can afford to wait. 'Offences will come, but woe unto them by whom they come!'

Anarchy must always flow from ignorance, and the wars and overturnings which have been the subject-matter of history, are evidence of the confusion which has prevailed and lead us to infer that if the world be in any accurate sense of the term divine, and not fortuitous, we may reasonably expect a nearer approach to order. The religious party seems to be of the mind of those to whom Paul refers when he says, 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' this party acts as if a higher condition of society were to be deprecated, as if the possible perfectibility of Humanity were an evil of the highest magnitude. And anarchy must continue so long as ignorance continues ; and if any one is inclined to deny the statement that anarchy is the proper designation of the present epoch, I would point out the standing armies of Europe, the condition of the Turkish empire, and the fratricidal war which was carried on in the United

States of America within the last few years, in these 'peace-piping times,'—a war unparalleled in magnitude, amongst a people speaking the same language, with the same general character of mind and religious ideas, and above all, where Protestantism is dominant, and Protestantism of the Puritan type,—where there is no Established Church, and no king and aristocracy. The do-as-I-like freedom, which exists in the United States, is a reaction from European despotism, but it is essentially anarchic, there is no real authority anywhere. The Americans are a great people, and have done wonders, but there is a flavour of vulgarism in their greatness; they remind one constantly in their books and conversations that their education has not been neglected—that they have heard of some of the names which have made the old world famous. This idea is indicated in the names of their towns—Troy, Athens, Utica: they have ransacked the conservatories of the world to stock their kitchen-garden. America gives the low side of democracy, its people do not rise to grand models, or high traditions, but they prefer pulling these down to their own level; their notion of equality proceeds from a sense of their own individual importance, and not from a profound estimate of the sacredness of being units in a whole which began we know not when, and which we believe to be eternal. Anarchy can only be overcome by education being extended as a matter of right and

duty to everybody,---for we can no more afford to permit the heir of a millionaire to grow up a neglected booby than the son of a hodman ; every man is born as a member of the human family ; he enters upon accumulations of knowledge and heroism ; he cannot live alone, he cannot abolish himself, he is the subject of care, and we are interested in making him fit for his place in the circle. No liberty can be claimed by an individual which is hostile to the liberty and welfare of everybody else, and an ignorant man is a mischief, an obstacle to the happiness and moral well-being of others. Ignorant peers and commoners, 'consolled to the chin,' have been the causes of bad laws, or prevented the abolition of them ; they have been the promoters of Fenianism in Ireland, and the opponents of every amelioration of the condition of the body of the people on some ground, quite inexplicable to themselves, of conservative wisdom. We are all interested in the education of the rich, their influence is very great, and we cannot afford to have it neglected. Had they been trained in political economy, they would not have defended corn laws ; had they been drilled in social statics, they certainly would not have nursed an alien Church in Ireland, and they would not continue to defend the intolerance of a Church whose only claim to exist is its supposed subordination to national requirements. The neglect of the education of the governing classes has been the

source of infinite evil—cushioned round by wealth, yet ignorant of the first principles of political right ; and so powerful is the influence of feudal tradition and habit in a free country like England, that a member of the great middle class, the first orator in the world, and a man of unstained purity and nobleness of character, who has shown himself thoroughly acquainted with national interests, only acquires position in the government of his country 'when the May of life is o'er,' and is practically placed at the disadvantage, in comparison with the son of a duke or an earl, of thirty years of conflict, to prove the requisite fitness.

Education embraces a great deal more than the elementary instruction of the common school, or the higher discipline of a college ; and we feel daily how sore is the need, and how pressing the necessity, for an instrumentality of recreative instruction, which would bring together all classes of citizens, apart from differences of rank and wealth, into sympathy, upon essentially national grounds of interest and union. In thinking of Magna Charta, or of the Revolution of 1688, we realize our position as Englishmen, and feel how much grander it is to throb with the national life, and how much finer it is, than thinking of ourselves as members of some little narrow sect of religionists. The sect may be a good thing in its way, but it is only as a preparation for a wider life and a nobler communion. A great event, a revolution, in

which the prospects of a country are brightened, and from which men date a happy turn in their affairs, is the source of national union and fellowship. A great man, a statesman, a thinker, or a poet, throws our little divisions into the shade, and we feel ashamed to drag the highest names into our petty disputes; and surely we see in these illustrations the evanescence of the superficial distinctions which cause so much vexatious antagonism. Education is the means towards bringing men into closer and more intimate bonds; they will learn that the interests of all nations are in the main mutual, that we are all members of one body, and that body is Humanity. When this truth has penetrated any considerable body of people, war will be impossible, and the resources of society will be multiplied immeasurably by the economy of thought and labour spent at present in offensive and defensive war.

It cannot be doubted that the Church up to the period of the Reformation had a most powerful influence in restraining the brute force of European nations, and it can as little be doubted that the desolating wars of the succeeding centuries were much the result of the divisions created by Protestantism. Romanism has exercised an influence in a narrow way in favour of catholicity; Protestantism is a negation, and has never roused any positive religious enthusiasm; it periodically excites a mad fanaticism

against Papists and infidels, but it is a poor thing in itself, and always seems labouring between opposite poles of thought; like a dull man it dispenses with research and reflection, by watching the policy of the two extremes, and carefully maintaining a position equidistant between them; in a word, Protestantism is simply compromise. Catholicism has done a great service for Europe and the world; and we must gratefully remember that, with all its cruel spirit of persecution, it was strictly in accord with the feelings of the people. The Church promoted unity, but not national unity; it furthered an ecclesiastical dominion which was very frequently opposed to the political welfare of each nation; it strove to bring men into an artificial relation, and by doing so outraged the true principles of justice and right. Free discussion can alone keep governments, religious and political, in harmony with growing knowledge; for every organization of human beings must represent conviction. People may be convinced that it is a good thing to deliver up their judgments to a pope or a bench of bishops; but they require freedom to be allowed the preference for slavery. The policy of repression adopted by the Church was suicidal. We know now how little it had to fear. It had prescription and possession on its side; but whilst boasting of faith, it was infidel to the core, and was persuaded that its case would not

bear daylight. The result of the policy pursued by the Church of Rome is replete with instruction for smaller and less influential societies. The world is conservative, but it is impossible to put faith in those who have no faith in themselves ; and the Church in the sixteenth century was paralysed with fear, having passed from insolent domination to abject fear and cowardice. It was absurd to suppose that the discovery of America, the invention of printing, and the revival of learning, could leave the Church uninfluenced. Erasmus endeavoured to smooth the path ; but the opportunity was lost, and the obstinacy of ignorance, as usual, prevailed. The people of any European country were, in the sixteenth century, very ignorant of the course of events which had led up to their own time. It was a time of confusion and convulsion. We have not now the same excuse. A large number of minds are well acquainted with the history of modern Europe, and know the misery and evil which resistance to advancing knowledge wrought. The literature which grew out of the movement of the sixteenth century has tended to bring nations together. Luther and Calvin, and Montaigne and the Italian Poets, and Shakespeare, have a fame as wide as the world, and have been great educators of men and women. Their ideas and their language have been the mental diet of millions, and unite men of the most diverse training and habits. Great

thinkers and poets present thoughts and pictures which call forth a general response. They are like the works of nature, free and open to all; they display, by their genius, the capabilities of Humanity; they add to its dignity; they extend the range of the reason and the imagination, and elevate the moral and intellectual temperature of the world.

The improvement and elevation of all is the great work of the future; and year by year, and century after century, will witness the endeavour to accomplish this result, and nothing short of this will bring into harmonious accord the entire resources of society. Exclusiveness will die as the great end of man will come more prominently forward—the Unity of Man. Education will give each an interest in national affairs; and the names of those who have improved our institutions, extended science, discovered new lands, reformed religion, created our literature, will be saints in the national calendar. Men will continue to differ on politics and religion, but their differences will become modified. The result of coming together in common schools will remove the asperities and the bitterness which at present characterize sect and party. Sectarianism and division will not vanish away in a twinkling, but they will be felt to be hindrances, and not helps. Men will desire to agree rather than differ, and their differences, consequently, will be expressed with more respect and friendliness.

They will represent more real conviction than differences do now, and they will conduce to bring out the real distinctions which must exist amongst creatures with diversities of organization and experience. The national life, which we believe to be the rational and legitimate issue of the past, will reflect all the influences which have produced it. It will not bring men into a dead, lifeless uniformity, but organize into healthy activity the infinite varieties of unfettered thought. The recognition of the Divine mind in the ordering of individual life, and the extension of that to national life, will preserve the religious instincts in vigorous action, and will subdue the materialism which threatens to reduce society to an association of beavers.

The Divine encompasses us on every side, and how high soever we raise the possible perfectibility of man, he is but a creature, the manifestation of Infinite Love, and his history is the revelation of God's way in the world. Any hope we may cherish must be in strict subordination to the Divine will, as it has been indicated in the past. Humanity is not a deity; it is simply the aggregate of imperfect beings; and whatever glory it may achieve, it does so in conformity with the laws which Infinite Wisdom has given for its rule and conduct. We are but children groping in the dark; we are here for a little; the world and the glory of it vanisheth away, and we know not what

we shall be; but the eternal, the everlasting Father endureth for ever.

Egotism is the strength of narrow and imperfectly educated minds, and has been a great source of influence in the past ; but increasing intelligence will reject the claims of individual self-assertion, and the highest mind will disavow pre-eminence, and seek its tribute of appreciation in being in accord with the wider wisdom of the general conviction. Law underlies all human effort, and the highest is the result of the surroundings. The world moves forward, and men retain old watch-words ; but the ground is continually changing, and the innovator of one age is the conservative of the following. We are in an introductory stage of human affairs. The legislation of the present is an admission that we are in a state of transition. England, France, Italy, Spain, above all, Russia, are endeavouring to reconstruct the political fabric ; but alter and amend as they may, all these States must sooner or later abandon monarchy and aristocracy, and adopt republicanism. It can only afford the due scope for national growth and expansion. England possesses the spirit and the machinery for perfectly free government, and our example will excite the advanced political opinion of Europe. The clumsy attempt to base despotism upon democracy must end in total discomfiture ; free thought is inaugurated, and it certainly will demand political regeneration. As intelli-

gence increases amongst the body of the people, the greater will be the necessity of fixed principles about Man and his future. And it must not be doubted that some measure of certainty is attainable as to the true method of human progress. The past is the great storehouse of experience, and no system of religion or politics can be admitted which has not its roots in the past. The conception of life as the expression of the Divine thought will give a depth and beauty to life, will break down the artificial barriers which divide society, will hallow every occupation and every day, will abrogate the empirical codes of morals and legislation, and introduce the order of God instead of the disorder of men. The sense that we live in God's world, and that in it 'nothing is common or unclean,' will teach us 'to attend to the neglected and remember the forgotten.' The sore evils which maim life and poison it at the spring will gradually disappear before the efforts of a missionary spirit, which will look upon men and women as the heirs of salvation, and not of condemnation. The whole history of nature and of man is an unveiling of the Infinite One; the record is not closed, the process is not finished—we see but in part, and, reason as we may, life remains solemn and mysterious. To accept the facts of life, reverently to submit to all the dispensations of this state, to bear in mind that only through suffering can we be perfected, will work out

for us as individuals true life, and will help us to be lively members of that divine society which is scattered through the world, and which will sooner or later draw together from divine affinity, drawing all men into it as into a holy catholic church, where there will be many dialects, but all leading into the Unity of the one Spirit. The teachings of our Master are a warrant for hope, for faith; he taught us to look upon God as our Father; he died for all men; and in the face of these things, can we doubt that God, who raised up Christ to be the healer of the nations, will also carry forward the work of the world's regeneration, until strife and confusion shall cease, and a reign of justice be established,—when there shall be no classes, and no sects, but a religion which shall include all men, the learned and the ignorant alike? These relative terms will go out of fashion, for learning will be more humble, and ignorance will not be at all. If we keep our hearts humble and our minds clear, and be stayed upon God, we need not fear. There is One who ruleth in righteousness, and he will enfold us in His everlasting rest!

