

single noun substantive without prefixing one and the same meaningless adjective; the shameless vice which hides not its head even at high noon; the Embankment, where men are nightly set upon, robbed, and thrown into the river; the gambling clubs; the suburban races; the court into which no decent person may venture by night or day; the music halls and their senseless and mischievous songs; the drinking; the wife-beating; the starvation. Were all these things written down, a picture might be produced which would make the London of Victoria compare with the Rome of Nero."—If it be true that London of to-day can be compared with Rome in the time of Nero, in those respects so forcibly described in the quotation we have given, Christianity has been a greater failure than might have been supposed from its wealth, command of power, and organisation.

"THE LAW WITHIN THE LAW."

"Cambridge, 10th March 1843."

"TO MAJOR GENERAL CRAWFORD."

SIR,—The complaints you preferred to my Lord against your Lieut. Colonel both by Mr. Lee and your own letters have occasioned his stay here. * * * * "Sir, The State in choosing men to serve it takes no notice of their opinions; if they are willing to serve it that satisfies. I advised you formerly to bear with men of different minds from yourself; if you had done it when I advised you to it I think you would not have had so many stumblings in your way. It may be you judge otherwise; but I tell you my mind—I desire you would receive this man into your favour and good opinion. I believe if he follow my counsel he will deserve no other respect from you. Take heed of being sharp or too easily sharpened by others against those to whom you can offer little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion. If there be any other offence to be charged upon him—that must in a judicial way receive termination." * * *

Your humble servant,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

This is a letter worthy of remark in more than one way, but its chief teaching centres in the fact of its being a preaching of toleration by an intolerant person. Few would be found to differ from the view of Cromwell's character which asserts him to have been impatient of contradiction to any of his well-considered lines of thought and action; politically he was the greatest iconoclast the realm of Britain ever knew; a man who saw through the tinsel of outward shows, and showered merciless blows upon the poor old graven images which had held men's eyes in awe for centuries. And socially the influence of his work was greater even than in its political significance; only one restraining power held the Revolution from degenerating into an Anarchy of society, when that society had seen its most sacred symbols and idolized safeguards broken down beneath the feet of the puritan soldiers. The restraining power was the intense religious feeling in the heart of the Great Soldier—a feeling so utterly beyond the puny "dilettante" religious life of the present day that not one in a thousand of us can believe that it ever did exist in all its passionate breathing life in the breasts of a whole nation. But the fact is there, patent to all who will take the trouble to interest themselves in the subject, and not one of those who do so but will close the study saying "The truth is clear, these men thought and acted in the light of their religion; it is idle to try to explain their motives and actions by the one careless explanation 'Cant and Hypocrisy!' There was faith, there was power, there was law in their view of life." But the effect of this religion was deep intolerance; that which they considered the rule of conduct for themselves must be made the rule for all others: especially was this evident in the dictates of their Chief; there was to be no Popery, no Antichrist in England then—Agnosticism was not even dreamt of, so needed no prevention. Reading his character thus, does not the letter which commences this article seem like a paradox, a startling falling away, and rejection of all those ideas by which his life was guided? A mere appearance only, for in reality this letter shows he had for a moment falling upon him a ray of higher light; he emerges from the bondage of the

lower law into the glory of the Higher Law, seldom able to pierce through the dusty windows of a soul whose early education and narrow surroundings had obscured the ability to receive such glorious messengers. Justice broke in, human feeling glowed warm, and the brotherhood with earnest manhood melted the ice of intolerance and formalism which had crystallized about his heart. So he says, "Here is your brother; recognize the good in him, look through the outer husk of him, and if you can only measure him by your wooden-headed standards of creed and doctrine—beware!"

And thus speaks every mighty brain, every great soul who has been a leader of his people, a prophet to his disciples, a moulder of the shape his nation shall take after he has passed away. Their deeds, and the deeds of their interpreters (alas!) have become history; their "revelations" after being the bread of life to thousands, become mouldy to the growing wants of their descendants. Happy indeed is it when their teachings have not become worse things than these, when their names have been turned into war-cries, and their religious symbols embroidered on flags floating over fields of carnage and the martyr's dungeon. But those who read of these men with eyes wide opened will see points of light touching the old darkness everywhere, and those points of light are the in-breakings of the Higher Law upon the minds of religious men. Before we attempt to show how this light fell, let us try to understand something of what this light is. Is there any higher law outside Necessity, outside social observances, outside the many "revelations" of the thousand creeds; a law in which the men of any recognized belief, or of no definite belief, can take refuge and find strength? Is there any common mental standing-ground on which the man who explores the star-depths and classifies the fossils to-day can take his place side by side with Moses and Paul, Buddha, Mahomet, and Cromwell. Surely there is. Among the mutable shifting things of the world one law stands so inexorably unchanging, so strongly speaking through the Eternal Silence that it should be called Divine, because it is clothed with what seems to us the attributes of Divinity. That law is "*Nothing of good is lost*"—a constant metamorphosis, but a constant progression, a slow widening out of To-day's narrow dark movements into a Beyond where "we lose ourselves in light". And it is the outer beams of of this glorious Light-Sea which have fallen through the ages here and there upon the souls of men exalted by their intellectual force into leaders of their fellows, raising them for a moment from the baser doctrines they had evolved from their surroundings. Let us notice some instances where the law comes clear from the past. When the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter formulated the creed which has been the religious guidance and the national safeguard of his people ever since, that creed, stripped of its priestly dress, was one of the lowest ever offered as the mental nourishment of a portion of our race, (it was not fitted or even proffered save to the chosen people) teaching as it did the dreadful dogma "The spoils to the Victor!" Keep your bodies strong and healthy, your family arrangements pure, your laws just to each other, and your reward shall be—eternal life after death? No—not a word of it. Serenity of conscience and intensity of moral beauty? No, but worldly success—permission to murder the peaceful inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and become the owners of the "land flowing with milk and honey." This teaching had its result and its partial attainment; in the days of the Captivity and the Dispersion it was very poor food for the soul, but in the days of Joshua and of Solomon there was power in the motor of the Mosaic creed—"Help yourselves, and you will be helped." Could that prophet who uttered a doctrine so cruel have seen one glimpse of the Higher Law? Listen. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor and needy in thy land" "Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons nor take a gift." "Love therefore the stranger." "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or sheep go astray." "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped." "Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother." Note how the human struggles through the priest, how the heart triumphs over the brain, and makes the urger to bloodshed kindred with the patriot he would destroy and the women he would massacre.