

we owed our safety. Was this timidity, or courage? baseness, or magnanimity? Selfish or unselfish? Let us not boast. A nation has no more right to boast of its instincts than a man of his personal beauty. But when our motives are arraigned, we must defend them, not for our own sake, but in the defence of our cause. The magnanimous always incur this danger—that their motives may be misinterpreted; and their magnanimity itself prevents them from taking any serious notice of the mistake. It is their nature to yield to others advantages which they might have retained for themselves. Such a habit is interpreted as mere cowardice by those who are not themselves magnanimous. Whenever we make a fresh concession to Indian public opinion, they are not ashamed of lowering us in the esteem of our subjects, and encouraging revolt, by proclaiming on the housetops that we never yield except to threats; though the real and obvious reason is, that we should be unwise to yield to a demand before we are assured that it is both genuine and popular. Our guiding principles in these cases are in conformity with Christian teaching. The Christian too renounces his own advantage, is not easily provoked, and endures contempt and reproach without resentment. The comparison of a spider fattening on a fly, which is current among Germans, was no doubt suggested by utterances of the same class and the same origin. The fly, at any rate, has no reason to complain. She is ten times fatter now than she was when the depleting process began.

Many other illustrations of the same general tendency might be adduced, such as the emancipation of our slaves, our missions, religious or medical, and other countless philanthropic enterprises; but we must not close the account without mention of one which is of