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(For the *Odd Fellows' Record*.)

**GENTLENESS VERSUS SEVERITY.**

How much more natural to man Severity is, than Gentleness and Kindness, is proven by the fact, that never mortal conceived the idea of governing mankind by goodness. The sublimity of the conception appertains not to earth. 'Twas heaven-born. Until Jesus taught, human ear had never heard such counsel; but it required the blood of Jesus to write, in indelible characters, upon the human mind, the inspiration from on high. Philosophers and Priests, for ages prior to His advent, had taught and preached: the former, the wisdom and morals of the schools, the latter, the virtues and duties of Heathenism;—but none conceived the thought of saying unto criminal or offender—"Go, and sin no more:" or, "Thy sins are forgiven,"—or "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." No, no! 'twas *natural* to man to *compel—to use force*. What! the High Priest forget himself so far as to weep over unrepentant, or even repentant, sinner! Forbid it, Pride of Man, and Dignity of Rank! But, Jesus appeared on Earth, and the glad tidings were heard, at first in whispers, in Jerusalem and Gallilee; anon, like the blast of clarion: now, the Earth, the Sea, the Sky, the Universe, illimitable space, may be said to be filled with the Holy—God-proceeding—accents: "Peace on Earth: Good-will to Man."

Yet, though nineteen centuries have passed away, since Jesus taught upon the plains and 'mid the hills, and in the temples of Judea; though, during that vast period of time, His doctrine has been constantly advancing, yet, so natural to man is it, to compel, to use force, in order (so he will tell you), to sustain virtue, preserve morals, and make true Religion dominant, that cruelty yet stalks over the Earth, relentless as a famishing wolf, or tigress deprived of her young; and there are Statesmen, and Legislators and Priests, yet heard declaring, notwithstanding the Bible is before them, that Severity is the one thing needful. Yes, though nearly nineteen centuries have been numbered with the things that were, since Calvary's Mount was covered by the Jewish multitude, gloating over the last throes of the expiring Christ, millions of those who call themselves His followers, His Disciples, still cling with the tenacity of the blood-sucker, or vampire, to severity, to punishment, to the infliction of death, as the sure means of making mankind, Virtuous, Moral, Religious, and Humane! Thus it is evident, that without Divine

aid and instruction, Mercy, and Kindness, and Gentleness, and Love would never have governed man—as they do now, to a considerable extent, and as they will eventually, altogether. Wherever floats the banner of the Lamb, the Dove, and the Cross, there Gentleness and Mercy have, in a great degree, displaced severity; even in those regions, however, even in Christendom, much yet remains to be done in that respect. The sun of Kindness and Benevolence is rising in the Heavens, but the Meridian is not yet near attained. It will continue to rise, however, (there can be no doubt of it) until its genial warmth is universally felt, and the great globe presents one vast Brotherhood.

We were induced to take pen in hand to make the preceding observations, by descriptions recently given in the newspapers of the day, of severity and cruelty to man, revolting to humanity. For one example, we cite the case of the Hussar, White. That unfortunate man was so terribly flagellated, that his back was as a butcher's shambles—the blood completely saturated his trowsers: he was conveyed in that state to the Hospital. The details of the whole proceedings were sickening to the senses. The unfortunate died; but whether the unmerciful flogging was the cause of his death, is doubtful. There can be no doubt, however, that the punishment was brutal, and that its effect (had the man lived) would not have been to reclaim, but to harden and brutalize. Punishment for the offence he had committed, (a most serious one against military discipline) was indispensable; but the punishment that renders the offender a worse man—a more desperate criminal—is punishment thrown away—lost—worse than lost. To reclaim should be the only object of all punishment; otherwise, it is cruelty,—and cruelty is crime. Unfortunately, there is a strong natural disposition to punish and inflict torture on those who irritate and annoy us, that pushes us on, almost all of us, to cruelty; and blinds us to the fact,—for fact it is, nevertheless,—that all punishment, whose object is not to RECLAIM, is a crime against Society—a crime against God! But for the blessed Gospel of Christ, we should not have known this,—but knowing it, as we do, how mortifying the proof afforded by perseverance in such acts of cruelty as that just referred to—of the terrible tenacity of the human mind to cruelty, suffering, torture and blood. However disgusting the details of the punishment inflicted on the Hussar, White, it is nothing in comparison with the