

her doctrine or discipline. Ridicule may be a powerful weapon when directed against social or political blunders, but he who professes to know the human heart, should likewise know, that in the work of appraising its intimate motions and convictions, there is a point where criticism ends and sacrilege begins. The quick intuition of a gentleman "to the manner born" guesses this truth instinctively and puts it in practice almost unconsciously. But it escaped the man of the people, with a result of clear loss to himself, whatever the damage may or may not have been to the Catholic cause. For even if his character as a man can be cleared from the charge of the puerile spite which seems to prompt his malignant pen, and that we, in an excess of magnanimity, allow that his object was one of pure philanthropy, in exposing our alleged errors; there still remains the awkward fact that he bungled his task like the veriest tyro, and that his work, as a work of art is a melancholy failure.

We are less affected by the discovery of the same weakness in other great writers, probably because we loved them less. We are scarcely surprised when Tom Carlyle indulges his grim humor at our expense, because a couple of monks, guilty of the unpardonable crime of corpulence, happen to cross his path. We can afford to smile at his ridiculous estimate of Cardinal Newman's abilities, remembering how loth he was to acknowledge the power of any man's intellect excepting his own. Nor do Thackeray's sarcasms disturb us much. In fact we resent an injury only in a measure proportioned to the love we bear him who inflicts it. We scarcely feel it at all when we despise the perpetrator.

We need not look in vain for instances of a dignified and—from anti-Catholic point of view—justifiable attack upon the Church. Oliver Wendell Holmes does not love Rome any more than Charles Dickens, but he aims his shafts at us in a most good-tempered and gentlemanly

spirit. The refined scholar and amiable man of the world is never so limited in his resources as that he must have recourse to vituperation and petty spite, to express his disapproval of the darkness and heathenism in which we are charitably supposed to be enveloped by the majority of our enlightened, separated brethren. Consequently though we declined to share his opinions or applaud all his sentiments, we are more sensitive to his "faint praise," than to all the would-be crushing calumnies of our coarser-fibred opponents which, strange to say, in spite of the overwhelmingness of their number and import, have not yet succeeded in completely annihilating us.

It would no doubt be a melancholy and unprofitable task to enumerate the disenchantments a student is likely to experience upon close acquaintance with those whom he reverently calls great masters. We could almost hope that some trusting souls might go on forever believing and honoring, where enlightened ones are denied that hopeful consolation. There are frail natures made to lean on the strength of others, of whom we might truly say, "it were folly to be wise"; but those who must try the work of every man with the touchstone of truth and justice, and realize how few will stand the test, must school themselves to bear a harder part, for they shall be called on to suffer trials of faith and hope and love, unappreciable by the many who take yea and nay from all, but never ask why or wherefore. They must prepare their hearts for the sad but irresistible conviction, that in a world where perfection is unattainable, disappointment of one kind or another is inevitable.

Humanly speaking, the outlook presented by these reflections is discouraging; but to those whose vision reaches beyond this earthly horizon into the outer Infinite, they point unmistakably to the existence of a Perfection which we shall not know until "our mortality shall have put on immortality."

PRINCE EMILIUS.