

best blood, and prized it as men prize that which costs them dear. It had cost us nothing, we were born to it; we knew not its value by contrast as they did. In the early part of this century the power of Rome was in these lands a thing of the past, and it seemed to be fast decaying even in other lands. The notion grew up among us that there was no need to fear any revival of that deadly upas tree, which is the blight of all that is great and good, pure and prosperous. The light of true knowledge had for ever dispelled the dark fogs of superstition, so it was supposed; mediæval tyrannies and cruelties cloaked under a pretence of religion could never again obtain a footing in these lands of light and liberty. We might despise and deride the corruptions and follies of Rome, but as to dreading her influence—no. She was too far gone and too feeble to inspire fear, or even watchfulness.

This was all a delusion, and we have been roughly undeceived. The difficult and dangerous crisis through which England is now passing is the direct result of the course of action taken under this delusion, and God only knows what the ultimate consequences may be. A serpent may be scotched, yet not killed; it may retain life enough to turn and inflict on its foe a fatal wound. The