

how you can possibly have both, I cannot understand. We have, indeed, a quotation from Mr. Goldwin Smith about the desirability of an attainable ideal. If that means an ideal adapted to our nature and faculties, it is right and true enough; but if it means an ideal which ceases to perform the very function of an ideal, which is to lead us upward and onward, I am bold enough to differ. The ideal is never quite realized in art, or science, or conduct. The poet or painter, the thinker, the saint, all 'follow on.' In truth it must be so, the ideal is relatively attainable only; if it were attainable absolutely, it would leave no room for growth.

If Mr. Le Sueur surrenders this, he gives up the essential nobleness of human life. And, indeed, I note with regret in his articles an undertone of willingness to be satisfied with 'small mercies' in a moral point of view. If a man is a pretty good fellow to his wife and children, does not tell lies or cheat other people, and shows a readiness to meet kindness with kindness, we are told that life will be 'very tolerable' without the 'excessive self-renunciation' of the Sermon on the Mount. Very tolerable—to whom? There are some men who would rather die, and by a very painful death, too, than lose all the heroic and saintly elements from history and the lives around us. Deeds of patriotic heroism or of uncalculating love stir their souls like a trumpet. Their eyes dim with happy tears in the presence of the morally sublime. Indeed, I hesitate to receive Mr. Le Sueur's testimony as against himself, and more than half believe he is of the number.

Very much of Mr. Le Sueur's second article is occupied in the attempt to show that Christianity is a faith hollow, worm-eaten, and rapidly passing away. He says that the cry is echoed 'from every pulpit in the land.' I wonder where he goes to church—or whether he goes at all. It

is quite true that we meet plenty of this kind of statement in the writings of those who make it evident that their position, on the negative side, is already chosen; and there are not wanting timid souls who, in spite of their fervent desires, fear that what is said with so much persistency may be true. For it is just as true that fear renders us insensible to the strength of our positions, as it is that desire predisposes us to a too easy belief. Mill, who has done so much to warn us against fallacies, is as earnest in pointing out the one as the other danger. But if we take the great majority of Christian people—and I speak, not of the ignorant chiefly, but of the thoughtful and intelligent—while it is true that they are conscious of more or less difficulty in adjusting the different aspects of their thinking so as to form a consistent whole, they are possessed with a firm and unalterable faith that the main truths of the Gospel, as gathered up in the manifestation and work of Christ, will stand every strain, and finally rise into universal and triumphant acceptance. I know the minds of many—very many—of these, and I claim to speak for them with something of authority.

Mr. Le Sueur enumerates what he considers the characteristics of a 'hollow and worm-eaten faith,' and says that these are to be seen if we look around us. One or two of these, as he gives them, are so exactly the opposite of what we see, that one has to exercise some self-restraint lest their flagrant falsehood should unduly discredit the rest of his reasoning. He says a faith is dying, and that this is now the case as to Christianity: 'When . . . it seems a dangerous thing to so much as touch the text of sacred writings even with a view to bringing it nearer to the exact words of inspiration.' Now I make bold to say that there was never a time when the text of Scripture was handled with one-tenth part the cour-