

his castle gate shut against him by an heir to his earldom, and he mused as he

“ Sought for a shelter from cold and snow.”

And again he saw the leper coming beside him,

“ In the desolate horror of his disease.

And Sir Launfal said : ‘ I behold in thee

An image of Him who died on the tree.’ ”

He shares with the leper his last mouldy crust. He looks, and lo ! the leper is transformed into a shining one, and thus in stanza eight Lowell brings out all the power of the contrast. The lines have been often quoted, but will bear quoting once more :

“ And the voice that was calmer than silence said :

‘ Lo, it is I, be not afraid !

In many climes, without avail,

Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail ;

Behold, it is here—this cup which thou

Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now ;

This crust is my body broken for thee,

This water His blood that died on the tree ;

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,

In whatso we share with another’s need ;

Not what we give, but what we share—

For the gift without the giver is bare ;

Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—

Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me.’ ”

There are other poems of Lowell which breathe the same deeply religious spirit in the same key. In all the range of our devotional poets I do not know where to seek a lovelier embodiment of that side of our Christian faith which holds up the oneness of all believers in Christ. In his poem on “ Ambrose ” the plea for tolerance shines through all the structure of the verses and sings to us in their melodies. Mr. Lowell is no friend to creeds. He is in sympathy with those who think their day is over. We may or may not agree with him in this ; but we cannot refuse our admiration to the poetic beauty which he has thrown around these humanitarian views.

Puritan blood flowed in Mr. Lowell’s veins. Puritan characteristics are found in his mental and moral constitution. That virile and intense love of righteousness, that hatred of oppression, that scorn of double-dealing and trifling with moral distinctions, that repudiation of expediency as any arbiter when principles of right are at stake all this has found in his poetry frequent and abundant expression. They are the Puritanism of the nineteenth century refined and cleansed from its older austerity and hardness. They are founded, however, in religion. They are worthy the attention of every minister as an embodiment of what religion is to be in such themes.

Among the earlier poems is one entitled “ The Present Crisis.” It was