

I. We may see it, for instance, *in the light of the likeness which holds between the life of a nation and the life of an individual*, for the life of a nation follows the same laws as the life of a man. A nation, like a family, is something more than a mere collection of individuals; it is a corporate unity, whatever be its form of government. The citizens are the members of a living body, united in the brotherhood of a common national existence; the disease or health, the virtue or vice of any has some influence on the other members; there is a national life, to which each contributes, and by which each is affected. We use no mere figure when speaking of the national mind or the national conscience, for a nation may throb with keen intellectual enquiry; or be thrilled with anger, hope, or fear; it has the power of performing national virtues or of committing national sins, for which it may be visited with national rewards or punishments that should rouse it to feelings of national thanksgiving or penitence. Though the average lifetime of man may be but a short season in the existence of a nation,—though it may require many years, or even centuries, for a people to rise into spiritual or temporal prosperity, or to sink into degradation and decay, though the nation moves more slowly, and, as it were, in a vastly wider orbit than any of its members, yet it is clearly evident that the life of a nation follows, in the long run, the same laws as the life of a man. In both *e : g*; energy and labour win success; in both licentiousness is followed by weakness and shame; in both virtue will give influence; and vice, however accompanied, bring ruin and decay.

As it is easier for us to see the working of these laws in the life of a man than in that of a nation, we can illustrate the one by the other; doing so, we may see that just as surely as righteousness exalts a man, so surely must it exalt a nation. Common experience proves that it is so in the life of a man, for no other power save righteousness can give true dignity. Wealth cannot, for it is not in the abundance of what he *has*, but in the abundance of what he *is*, that a man's life consists. Often, instead of conferring dignity, wealth gives rise to pride and self-indulgence; and though a man be surrounded by all the