

growth and pruning and perfecting through which English law has passed. No age of English or American history has ever seen such activity and profusion in legal enactment as now prevail. With the Imperial Parliament at Westminster and the Federal Congress at Washington in almost continual session, there are nearly thirty Parliaments in the British Colonial system, and Legislatures of forty-five American States holding annual or biennial sessions, all engaged in supplementing and amending the old laws and in devising and passing new ones. Besides these are countless cities, towns and boroughs, each with a legislative board exercising the power of law-making upon many important matters of municipal life and government. The steps of the citizens desiring to walk uprightly are beset with labyrinths of statutory enactments that are intricate and confusing, and often so conflicting that he must stumble, turn which way he may. Volume after volume of annual statutes is issued year by year in every State of the Union, so that it is a heavy task for the lawyer to keep familiar with the growing mass of statutory law of his own state, and no lawyer who values his reputation would think of giving an opinion upon the law in a sister state, unless it might be upon the construction of some one particular statute.

Wherever legislative bodies assemble, are found exceeding activity and willingness to exercise the fascinating power of lawmaking. The process of turning a mental conception into a law is so simple and so easy in the ordinary State Legislature that laws are losing the sanction of solemnity and moral authority that they once possessed. Besides the spirit of obedience as a patriotic duty, there was in former days a feeling of reverence and awe towards the body of the law as being the embodiment of the wisdom of government inspired by a very high regard

for the welfare of society, and promulgated only upon most careful and mature consideration. The English race have been taught through centuries to regard human and divine law as closely related in their qualities of solemnity and authority. To them the inspiration and the type have been the law that was given on Mount Sinai, with the fire that burned upon it, and the thunders and lightnings, and the thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and the people standing afar off, awe-struck. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" is the Divine approval under which the Christian world has come to regard the law of the land as possessed of a Divine sanction. Law, as thus conceived, is not a thing to be changed with every whim and caprice of popular opinion. If it be, as the subject is taught to regard it, the expression of a wise and beneficent law-giver, whether prophet, or king, or sovereign people, then it is the product of superior knowledge and wisdom, the best that the heart of man can conceive or his experience suggest. The law-giver who changes his mind with frequency, or is constantly engrafting new limitations upon his code, or trying experiments in government, cannot expect to retain the reverence and respect of his subjects for his wisdom or ability.

Who has not a feeling of admiration for those laws of the Medes and Persians, which even the partiality of their king could not change to save a favorite of the court? It stirs our Anglo-Saxon blood with a thrill of pride to read of the sturdy steadfastness of our ancestors at the Parliament of Merton. When urged by the ecclesiastics to adopt the rule of the civil law upon a certain matter, all the earls and barons answered with one voice: "*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare!*" We will not change the laws of England!

There is nothing so ancient and well approved in our legal system that