

is impossible to over-estimate, and which are rare in the choicest races of mankind. Amidst their weaknesses, their confident boastings and imperfect performances, the Irish have shown themselves at all times, and in all places, capable of the most loyal devotion to anyone who will lead and command them. They have not been specially attached to chiefs of their own race. Wherever and in whomsoever they have found courage and capacity, they have been ready with heart and hand to give their services; and whether at home in sacrificing their lives for their chiefs, or as soldiers in the French or English armies, or as we now know them in the form of the modern police, there is no duty, however dangerous and difficult, from which they have been found to flinch, no temptation however cruel which tempts them into unfaithfulness. Loyalty of this kind, though called contemptuously a virtue of barbarism, is a virtue which, if civilisation attempts to dispense with it, may cause in its absence the ruin of civilisation. Of all men the most likely to appreciate it were the Norman barons; for personal fidelity of man to man lay at the heart of the feudal organisation. . . . The baron and his Irish retainers found the relations between them grow easy when the customs of the country were allowed to stand; and when a Butler or a Lacy, not contented with leading his people to spoil and victory, adopted their language and their dress, and became as one of themselves, the affection of which they were the objects among the people grew at once into adoration. Then old Celtic names were dropped. The fighting men of Galway became the De Burgh's men and called themselves Burkes. In Kerry and Limerick half the inhabitants became Geraldines. The Ormond or the Desmond of the day became a kind of sovereign. He forgot more and more that he was come to Ireland to introduce English order and manners; and to strengthen his authority and conciliate his subjects, he left them to their own laws and their own ways, while they in turn became the instruments of his ambition. His Norman dependents followed the example, took Irish wives, and followed Irish fashions; and if on one side, and in some places, the conquerors had introduced civilisation, elsewhere they had but lent fresh strength and sinew to the very thing which they were sent to subdue."

When the creeds separated, the mixture became slower, but to this hour it is not pure-blooded Kerry, but half-blooded Tipperary in which the vices Englishmen attribute to the Irish show themselves in their full power.

THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.*

It appears to us that every review which aims at supplying readers with something more than a guide to the circulating library, ought from time to time to call attention to the thoughts of the past as they are illustrated by the present, and we propose to make the attempt with the thinkers of a time to which the present generation is inclined to do scant justice,—the eighteenth century. We have much to learn from "the bankrupt century," as Carlyle has unjustly called the period finding its term in the French Revolution. The horizon of eighteenth-century thought was a narrow one; it would be mere affectation of candour to profess any doubt that ours is wider. But the men who have attended to few things have something to teach those who have attended to many, and we believe that the thinkers of our time might learn from their predecessors exactly those qualities in which they are themselves deficient. It may seem strange to those who recall the licence of abuse which the Hanoverian writers permitted themselves, to say that temperance is one of these qualities, and yet the assertion will not be thought unwarranted by any one who has studied what was once called by a wise man "the most modest book that ever was written."

Butler's "Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature" is a work which readers of our day would have peculiar difficulty in studying. A mental appetite stimulated by the rhetoric with which such a subject as Butler's would be treated now, recoils before his slow and careful reasoning, his anxious concession, his candid paring down to its uttermost tenuity the conclusion he asks his readers to accept, and his total absence of any glow of feeling; and the work thus characterised, and hampered besides by the dialect of a superficial time, is known to our own chiefly at second-hand. In this form it is peculiarly liable to distortion. Butler never meant to say, as he has been supposed to say—"Because those who account for the rise of this present constitution of things on the Christian hypothesis are no worse off, as far as difficulties go, than those who account for it on any other, therefore you ought to believe in Christianity." He was not returning a poor *tu quoque* to the objection against any difficulty in what he called the Christian scheme. He was dwelling on the fact that the world in which we live is an Order, and contending that this order is the ultimate object of our investigation. We have faculties to observe and compare, but not to judge, as we might judge arrangements for some end which we knew independently, the laws which regulate the world. Any criticism of a system of which we form a part is futile. Our first question with regard to such a system must be, "Is it probable that seventy years of life on this earth includes all that each individual can experi-

ence of its working?" Nature, Butler urges in reply, brings nothing to confute the anticipation of continuance which arises in the mind of one who is conscious of individual existence. If the old man on the verge of the grave is the same as the child within the womb, if the mutilated soldier is conscious that no part of himself is gone, if to the very edge of that change which we call death we have watched the force of mind and soul continued in all its keenness, then the belief that what each man calls *himself* will be destroyed when the material surroundings which have been often changed without affecting him are dissolved, is not justified by anything we see in the world around us. What, then, to judge from the analogy of all other changes, is to follow this event which we call Death? What follows every change of life? Is not our whole career a subtly intermingled course of seed-time and harvest? The idleness or folly of yesterday means the want or shame of to-day. Goodness is sometimes joined with pain, and wickedness with pleasure, but it is not *natural* that they should be so. In considering what is natural, we must watch, not events only, but tendencies; if we are really under a Governor, we must observe not only whether the laws which express his will may be sometimes set at naught by other agencies which for a time he sees good to leave unrestrained, but whether there are any laws at all. No doubt we must take some time for the discernment of these laws, the tendencies we have to look for are unquestionable only on a very wide view. Goodness is in this world a thing so hidden that we can hardly discern its natural consequences, but it is not the less true that they are natural. The case with regard to goodness is somewhat as it would be with regard to reason, if reason alone, and no difference of appearance or shape, distinguished man and the lower animals. Considering how large the disproportion between their number and ours, it may well be doubted whether in that case the advantages of reason would be apparent with anything like the clearness with which they are now. Something like this is true of the distinction between the good and bad in this world. The good are vastly outnumbered, and that goodness which is a natural bond of union has hardly time to show itself. We are here (the metaphor is ours and not Butler's, who, unless the above hypothesis can be called a metaphor, does not indulge in one throughout his work) in the position of a man who has fallen asleep by daylight, and waking in early dawn, asks, "Is this dim light a promise of what is to come?" It is quite conceivable that several minutes might pass before he could feel sure that the light was growing stronger, and if at the end of those few minutes he were to sink back into sleep, we can fancy that in remembering that brief awakening he might never be able to shake off some doubt as to whether it took place in the morning or evening twilight. Now our whole sojourn in this world can be little more with reference to the purposes of God than those few minutes of morning awakening, and our reasonings as to any evidence of those purposes must rest on indications slight as those by which in such a case we should be convinced that the light was growing stronger. As in such a case we should, if a journey were imminent, rise and set about our preparations before we felt absolute certainty that the growing clearness in the details of the room might not be the mere effect of our strained watchfulness, so, thinks Butler, the wise man will act on the faint foreshadowings of government in this order of nature, although they may not be of a kind which can be demonstrated to the understanding of one who knew nothing of the experiences through which they were discerned.

It is possible that in this meagre abstract of the portion of Butler's work to which we desire to call attention, the effect of reading a string of truisms, which is the first impression of the book to any but a patient student, may be somewhat exaggerated. Though a dissertation on a "Future State" and a "State of Probation" belong to a set of notions that are now obsolete, yet we are aware that every one speaks most truly in his own dialect, and that there is a danger of leaving thought bare in the attempt to strip from it the costume of a particular age. The historical aspect of thought is quite as important in this case as in others. Every page of Butler reminds us, for instance, that he wrote at a time when vice was fashionable. Considering the frequency with which the antithesis "Virtue and Vice" occurs in his pages, it is extremely important to remember how differently those words were illustrated for his contemporaries and ours. There were probably at that time, as at all times, individuals who had no belief in any Governor of the Universe, and who were virtuous; but, on the whole, it was not nearly so untrue then as it would be now to say that all good men were Christians. There are certain perplexities arising from the fact that men should, as a

* The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. By Bishop Butler.

body, teach and practice a high morality and oppose Christianity, which were quite out of sight for the thinkers of the eighteenth century, and we must not accuse them of want of subtlety, because they miss the inferences which we cannot help drawing from this fact. Again, we must always remember that Butler wrote before that great protest in favour of the obscure multitudes, whose condition often seems so difficult to reconcile with any belief in a righteous ruler of this world, which we sum up as the French Revolution. The conditions of modern democracy force the claims of individuals on the attention in a way in which they were never forced on the attention of the men of the eighteenth century. When they took what they would have called a broad view, it seems to us a partial view. Those classes whose demands form now the most obvious objects in the world of duty were lost to their eyes in a dim haze. The attention of the earthly ruler was not fixed on the needs of the suffering masses as, whatever his individual character, it must be now, and there was not the same demand for obvious sympathy in this case (to use the imperfect language we must use if we speak at all on such subjects) on the part of the heavenly ruler. To these substantial differences we must add the fact which, though apparently a mere matter of dialect, really indicates a revolution in thought since Butler's time, that he meant something different from what we do when we use the word "Nature." He used the word in a sense familiar to all who know the writings of the Stoics (evidently well known to Butler), the sense which we only retain in the adjective when we speak of its being *natural* to do so and so. He did not in using it intend to exclude the world of inanimate being, but he was thinking of man. We invert this procedure, aware that in many respects that man has a place in Nature, we yet in using the word "Nature" to some degree exclude man. The difference expresses the wonderful influx of attention and interest which the material world has received since Butler's day, and the reflected light which Physical Science has shed in quarters its direct rays could never penetrate. It is one of the cardinal facts we have to keep in mind in judging all the writers of the eighteenth century; we shall never be just to them or the richer for their bequest, if we forget that the study of Nature has received its most striking development since their day, and that something of what we have to learn from them is the value of the light which they lacked.

"Why, then," it may be asked, "call our attention to such books as you are criticising? That we should, as students of English literature and English history, read the works which have influenced thought in past days, and investigate their influence on history, we readily grant. But the very changes which, as landmarks of the altered current of thought, give historical value to such a work as Butler's, deprive it of that kind of value which would justify comments upon it in a newspaper of the day. If we are to attend to it as a memorial of the low morals, the narrow sympathies, and the restricted intellectual range of the past, it can have no interest for any but students in the present."

Perhaps we must allow that so far as Butler is a mere specimen of the eighteenth-century spirit he loses the kind of claim which we yet, on the whole, venture to make for him as a teacher for the present day. Nevertheless, the object of this notice is to urge that the change of thought in our day has done more to strengthen than to weaken Butler's position; that if he were to write now, since that change of feeling induced by the scientific ideas which form the atmosphere of this generation, and which finds its present consummation in the Darwinian theory of organic being, he could utter his protest against the refusal to hear any voice which addresses itself to the inward ear with all the weight of his own solemn thought, and with the added power of enlarged illustration and strengthened argument.

For what is that Darwinian view of Nature which we have been taught to accept as the starting-point of all future investigation? That nature is a unity in a sense in which our fathers could not so call it. While people thought that this frame-work of things in which we live originated on one principle and was kept up on another, all thought was inevitably moulded on this duality. Of course, good Christians believed that one Being was at the head of both systems, but the aspect he bore as regarded through either medium was so different that they were practically antagonistic. What did those who felt their need of a Redeemer care about the constitution and course of Nature? What did those who wanted to investigate Nature care about the "mediatorial scheme"? This antithesis may be put more concisely in the dialect of the past, but we are living still under the influence of this dislocation of our intellectual being. Only this inheritance of incoherence

left us by our fathers has changed its meaning. The triumphant force of our time is physical science, and all dominant ideas must take their colour from the speculations of those who deal with what can be weighed and measured. Now see how this duplicity of conception as to the origin of things affects those who under these altered circumstances study a constitution and course of Nature. They have drawn in with their mother's milk the conviction that all that they can make out about the world in which they live has nothing to do with what we call God; that this agency is manifested, indeed, solely by interfering with those sequences which they spend their lives in deciphering. No man who has imbibed the true scientific spirit will deny any agency on the ground that he has never seen it at work, nor even on the stronger ground that all that he knows would be interfered with by admitting it. But when men have devoted their whole time and energy to the study of something in the order and harmony of which they find their exceeding great reward, and all they know of something else is that this second entity is said to manifest itself in interruptions of this order and harmony, what is likely to be their state of mind with regard to it? "When we see this constitution and course of Nature interfered with," they will say, "then we shall have to believe that such interference is possible. In the meantime, as it appears that the laws by which this constitution of Nature is governed do not hold good in the region from which this interference is said to emanate, as all the ultimate decisions attainable by that study, the most insignificant fruit of which is the prosperity of a nation, are liable to be upset, and the fruit of a life-long patient investigation turns like fairy money to ashes when we enter on this region, you cannot wonder that we should trouble our head very little about it. While the natural world invites and rewards the devotion of any number of minds and any number of years, we must decline to invert all the habits of mind we have moulded on that study for something of which all we know is the fact that it does need this inversion."

No, we cannot wonder at it. The state of mind of scientific men towards theology is the inevitable result of this duality in men's conception of the laws which regulate Nature, and the interruptions to law which are supposed to have originated Life, a result which, like every analogous product of a particular conception, long survives its parent. Darwin's *Origin of Species* gave the death-blow to that sickly and yet long-lived theory, but that theory has fixed the attitude of scientific men towards theology, and we do not anticipate any change in their attitude during our own generation. And yet it is through their work that the argument on which we are dwelling has received its most forcible illustration and escaped its most formidable difficulty. For the great obstacle to any patient attention to such an argument as Butler's, before the scientific development of our own day, lay in this very theory. If the origin of all organised being lay wholly *outside* the constitution of Nature, it might seem doubtful logic to found arguments as to the ultimate destiny of individual beings on anything we could observe from this course of Nature. If the whole machine had to be stopped that man might be introduced into it (and this is surely no unfair representation of the old hypothesis of Creation), there must have been always a certain hesitation in applying any reasoning founded on the working of this machine to the purpose and destiny of man. But if it is by a perfectly natural process that we can trace our genealogy from the first germ of life on this earth, what an enlarged basis is immediately gained for any kind of inference drawn from the natural order in which we live.

When Butler wrote, for instance, the gradual process of development by which each one of us has emerged into conscious life had no parallel in the prevalent conception of Creation. The first man took his start from that eminence which all other men reach by long climbing. There was no homogeneity between the dawn of this life for each one of us and the dawn of this life for mankind, and if any one sought to trace an analogy between the individual and the race, he found no help in any teaching concerning its origin. The links of the chain seemed fashioned within the kingdom of Nature, the chain itself rested on some support belonging to the kingdom of the Supernatural. Therefore, whatever vista might open for the race, analogy suggested no inference for every member of that race. Think how that fact bears on Butler's reasonings concerning what he calls a Future Life, and what we should call the permanence of this life. If any one had asked while the old hypothesis of Creation lasted, "Everything in Nature suggests a beginning and not an end for man, and may it not be so for men?" he would have provoked the response, "The two ideas have no connection, the origin of men is natural, and the

origin of man was supernatural." But now is there no force in the question? Of course we do not put it forward as any proof of man's immortality. Proof from analogy is impossible, but is there not here exactly that kind of suggestion on which Butler dwells throughout his argument as to the attitude of expectation with which we are to approach certain ideas? And only those who declare that this kind of argument is futile (and they will not be the keenest observers of the process by which belief is actually generated) will deny that as far as the origin of the individual and the race have been assimilated by recent speculations, so, if the spirit of Butler's treatise is to hold good, will their duration be also.

It is, however, in the portion of Butler's work most liable to distortion that we discern a meaning which the doctrine of Natural Selection lights up most fully. His opinion that "probability is the guide of life," and the course of reasoning by which, starting from this, he attempts to prove that the preponderant evidence on the side of Christianity is sufficient to induce men to act on the hypothesis of its truth,—this belief, as it is often expressed, jars on all that is highest in the mind of our day. As people generally take it—that one had better behave as if one believed something, supposing there is any chance of being punished for not believing it—this view opposes our fundamental conception of truth, as the ultimate object for the desires of man. It would be too much to say that there is nothing of this feeling in Butler. Nevertheless, we are sure that it is not from a patient study of his argument that any one will derive this impression. No one can follow the slow movement of his utterance, weighted with great thoughts, without feeling that truth was to him more precious than anything which truth might bring as its consequence. To him, we believe, the question presented itself thus. Is there any medium through which we can discern Truth but that of experience? Is it possible to test any hypothesis, otherwise than by acting upon it? It is from a deeper thinker even than Butler that we must learn this lesson, in a form which it is impossible to confuse with this vulgar obliteration of truth by safety. Butler's dialect, we admit, lends itself to this distortion. Still it is a distortion, and had he lived when the wider view of nature open to our generation sheds light upon every neighbouring region, we believe he might have escaped it. At all events, we, following on his steps, and discerning in the *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* and the *Origin of Species by Natural Selection*, specimens of the same kind of patient thought working in regions so different that the workers could never have recognised each other as the intellectual kindred they are,—we may see that according to the teaching of both, the thought within and the world without are developed on the same principle. Certainty is the result of the same process which originates Being. As every organism tends to vary from its parent type, so every thought represents its object with a difference, and truth is attained by the survival of the thought strong enough to bear the strain of action. Experience, killing off all beliefs and theories that will not bear this strain, selects continually new convictions to meet the changed elements of the ages, developing truth exactly as we have learnt to believe that life is developed, by continually pruning away all that is not fitted to endure. And if it seems strange to us that God should thus reveal Himself to creatures so frail as we are,—that of lives so short, and so full of urgent need for faith in Him, a large portion should need to be spent in this blind groping after Him, may we not answer in Butler's words, but with a range of meaning unattainable by him, that it is not more strange than that "of the numerous seeds and bodies of animals which are adapted and put in the way to improve to such a point of natural maturity of perfection, we do not see perhaps that one in a million actually does"? (*Anal.* i. 5.) A world thus formed seems to us to answer to a God thus revealed.

MR. BARING-GOULD'S LIVES OF THE SAINTS.*

THE author of *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* has found an appropriate task in writing *The Lives of the Saints*. We have already briefly noticed the first of these volumes, but the magnitude and interest of the work, and the literary merit, never wanting to Mr. Baring-Gould's pen, with which it is executed demand a more detailed review. In regard, indeed, to magnitude, the task which the author sets before himself is enormous. Each month is to have its volume, and under each day is ranged a cata-

logue, more or less lengthy, of saints who are celebrated on it. Not a single day is vacant, or anything like vacant, one holy personage, St. Oswald, Archbishop of York, being content with the intermittent honours of February 29. But the names of which Mr. Baring-Gould gives some notice do not by any means represent the whole of his work, which is quite as much one of compression as of compilation. The labours of Bollandus the Jesuit and his colleagues and successors in the gigantic work of the *Acta Sanctorum* extended to more than fifty folio volumes. Since their day, two centuries and more, not indeed so fertile in saints as were the primitive and mediæval times, but yet not wholly barren, have passed away, and made no insignificant contribution to the calendar. The age is intolerant of folios, and will probably consider the thirteen octavo volumes—twelve and a supplement—which Mr. Baring-Gould proposes as giving limits sufficiently liberal. It would have been well, indeed, were the work to be regarded solely from the literary point of view, if the rejection of minor and less important biographies had been carried much further than has been done in these volumes. All the author's skill has not been able to prevent many of the pages from being somewhat tedious. Tedious, however, in parts every comprehensive set of biographies must be; the reader has always his remedy in his own hands; and he must remember that many personages, generally obscure, have often a local and particular interest attaching to them. On the whole, he will readily allow that Mr. Baring-Gould has made his selection with judgment.

Lives of the Saints must, of course, be brimful of miraculous incident, and a reader's first impulse is to note how a writer of these days deals with this very perplexing element. It is obvious that any critical examination of the testimony on which these events are recorded is out of the question. The materials for carrying it out are not obtainable. Were it possible, it would be wholly out of place. The only possible attitude is either one of thorough and unhesitating belief—and this is, to an Englishman, practically impossible—or that which our author aims at, and, in a great measure, succeeds in taking up. "In writing the lives of the saints," he says in his preface, "I have used my discretion in relating only those miracles which are most remarkable, either for being well authenticated, or for their intrinsic beauty and quaintness, or because they are often represented in art, and are therefore of interest to the archæologist." This attitude of mind is, indeed, essentially critical. Mr. Baring-Gould rejects continually what displeases his taste, and few, if any, of his readers will blame him for doing so. In the beautiful legend of St. Vitalis, for instance, which some of our readers may remember as it was lately told in verse in another portion of these columns, he speaks of "putting aside some absurd fable which has attached itself to the story." He is quite right in putting it aside; it would probably have gone far to spoil the whole; at the same time, it is of course as "well authenticated" as the rest. It is rejected because it is not artistically harmonious, or if another way of putting the matter be preferred, because it does not tend to edification. We may call this attitude of mind either literary or didactic—there is not much difference practically between the two terms—and it is manifestly the right one, we may say the sole possible one, to assume. To put the thing in another light, the writers of such lives as these should in one way speak like an advocate. The recognised etiquette of the Bar, though indeed it is not unfrequently transgressed, forbids as the part of the pleader the asseveration of his personal belief in what he advances. At the same time, he speaks, and it is his duty to speak, in a tone of belief. And this seems the true line for a writer of these lives. He must keep out of sight the criticism which, as a matter of fact, he continually exercises. Whatever jars on the taste, whatever is coarse or extravagant, whatever too manifestly transcends the limits of belief, he will quietly reject, and then he will tell the tale with no comment, except it be here or there to note some beauty; tell it with no assertions of its truth, but still tell it as if it were true. We do not pretend to attribute this theory, if it may be so called, to our author, but he seems to us to act generally on something of this kind, and rather to mar the effect of his work where he departs from it. Mr. Baring-Gould has no sort of right, whatever his acuteness or soundness of judgment, to pick out from this vast mass of supernatural incident what he chooses to believe; but he has a right, whether as a literary man or a teacher, to choose what he thinks appropriate for his purpose. And because he does this on the whole with much judgment, while he tells his stories with much simplicity, feeling, and grace, his *Lives of the Saints* must be pronounced a decided success. Of course the work is a very difficult one. To take an instance, what could be more perplexing than the Irish Saints, with their marvels, so quaint, so

* *The Lives of the Saints*. By the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, M.A., Author of "The Origin and Development of Religious belief," &c. Vols. I. and II. London: John Hodges. 1872.