SOME NEW BOOKS.

George Eliot's Early Essays.

We find ourselves turning over the articles which Miss Mary Ann Evans contributed to the *Westminster Review* years before she seems to have dreamed of becoming a novelist, with the same curiosity and interest with which we scan the essays printed by Fielding in the *Champion*, or the papers which Thackeray wrote for *Fraser's Magazine*. In such informal dissertations on literary and social questions, in such impersonal estimates of the work done by others, they who themselves possessed, but had not yet demonstrated artistic powers of the first order, could hardly help revealing their opinions and predilections with a precision and candor not to be expected from them at a interstage of their careers, when they were conscious that a piercing light would search out the purport of their lightest word. In the case of George Eliot especially, whose reviews were anonymous, and who could never have supposed that such fugitive ventures would ever be widely associated with the name of a confident and obscure young woman, we gain access in her early essays, as in no other of her published writings, to the sanctuary of her largest convictions, and to the intellectual workshop in which literary methods and processes were tested, discarded, or approved, and literary tools fashioned and manipulated long before their author had discerned the larger purposes to which they were to be applied. When Miss Evans discussed "Evangelical Teaching" in the *Westminster* and when she wrote the still more remarkable paper on "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness," she did not foresee that her view of the great problems of which religion and philosophy have attempted solutions would become a matter of great moment and keen inquiry to the English-speaking race, seeing that through its investiture with the master charm of art it was to exercise extraordinary procreative power—that, before she died, the crudite conclusions and the strenuous controversies of a hundred theologians would appear of trivial import beside the place attained among the enduring agencies which shape thought and character by the ideas of one who, at the age of thirty-five, was still unappreciated and almost unknown. Scarcely less significant than the disclosure of her beliefs respecting the questions most vital to humanity are her reflections on the work done and the place occupied by woman in the world—a place which she herself was to exalt as signally by a splendid vindication of the feminine intellect—or her examination of those types and aspects peculiar to rural and industrial life which she was afterward to interpret and dignify—or the analysis of humor and wit by one whose own works were to furnish admirable illustrations of mirthful or kindly insight and of epigrammatic satisfaction—or the caustic arraignment of the blunders perpetrated by feminine novelists on the part of a woman whose own achievement was to be well nigh as massive and lasting as any wrought within the recent annals of letters by the hand of man. Aside, however, from the ancillary and illuminating value of these essays, regarded as long-needed aids to our knowledge of a great writer, the papers now first collected and republished by Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls are of intrinsic worth, and deserve to be included in a Standard Library. We must bear in mind that Miss Evans was 34 years old when the first of these articles was penned. These papers, therefore, must not be confounded with the callow flights of an ill-furnished and immature intelligence. They represent the deliberate utterance of a woman who was at once a student a thinker, and an artist, whose mind was already more amply stored than that of most masculine writers of prescription, whose reasoning powers had been sharpened by years of debate, whose judgments had been formed upon those root questions and cardinal beliefs by which, whatever may be said of his impulses and habits, the principals and purposes of each adult human being are mainly moulded. Some of them, indeed, may well challenge for reach of knowledge, for profoundness of intuition, and for perfection of expression a high place among the essays published in the last half century, although that branch of composition has been embellished by such names as those of Emerson, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Macaulay, and De Quincey.

I.

In her essay on "Evangelical Teaching," Miss Evans shows how accurately she had already learned to measure the mental calibre and the moral stature of many of those who, in this age of the world, are race preaching for a profession. "Given a man with moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetoric, affluence, and great glibness of speech, what, she asks, is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily obtain power and reputation in society? Where is that fashion of mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where pat rules will be accepted as wisdom, biased narrowness as lofty zeal, uncouthness as dignified and God-given piety?" Miss Evans answers her own questions by advising that such a man should become a preacher. "He will then," she says, "find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with a high reputation for sanctity. After indicating some of the methods by which an evangelical teacher may gain a metropolitan pulpit, she proceeds to show how pleasant to the political flesh when that goal of the average preacher's ambition is attained, and how many are the "sacrifices" which, in the Vale of Sin Lay. "Somewhat at a distance during the week in the presence of working-day interests and lay splendors, on Sunday the preacher becomes the synoure of a thousand eyes, and predominates at once over the Anghicrom with whom he dines, and over the congregation, member of his church or vestry. He can." Miss Evans continues, "an immense advantage over all other public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of hisses and blows. Counsel for the defendant, the honorable gentleman who sits on the other side of the House is ready to flout the facts and figures shown up by his honorable friend on the opposite side. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience quietly slip out under cover of the attention paid to his successor. Not so the preacher is compliment to one may depart. Like the writer of imaginary conversations, he may put what immortal sentiments he pleases into the mouths of his antagonists, and swell with triumph when he has refuted them. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him in black and white. He may, in an evangelical effervescence of feeling, wrench the most incredible facts to the support of his doctrine, and all this he may do with impunity, for neither of his hearers, who are not critics, nor of his critics, who are not hearers, and scribes who go the round of the pulpits and chapels, and are on the watch for slips and blunders in the preacher to make a feast of, dare to call in question the fact so boldly asserted in the pulpit, for it may be, they are practically the most irresponsible of all talkers. Why is it, she asks, that the hint thrown out by George Eliot has never been acted on by newspapers? Why have the press its public as well as its dramatic critics. We are we not given dramatic sketches as well as occasional reports of sermons? Let us hear George Eliot's dream, let us see what will and will not, especially applied to all the forms of public speaking, or if there is the community takes only a faint and interest in a dreamy?

II.

In the paper on "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness" Miss Evans grapples with the question "Are sentiments dictated by a belief in the practice of a high and pure code of ethics is possible without a religious sanction and independently of a creed which postulates a plurality of future rewards and punishments. We need not read the paper to know that her bonds that George Eliot did not accept the dogma of immortality, although few authors have done more by the manifold and subtle influences of an art that was never prostituted, to make life noble and beautiful, to plant truth and sympathy firmly in the human breast. Let us see how Miss Evans deals with those who contend that virtue, in its highest and sweetest aspects, is unattainable without an acceptance of the Christian's faith in a world beyond the grave. She begins by quoting from Young a succinct statement of the orthodox theory:

> As in the dying parent dies the child,
> Virtue in him that has no immortality
> Who tells me he denies his soul immortal,
> Let him look to his heart, has told me he's a knave.
> I shun his company as that of a plague
> Nor care though mankind perish, if he smiles.

To this George Eliot replies: "It is quite possible that you (Dr. Young) would be a knave, and love yourself alone, if it were not for your belief in immortality; but you are not to force upon me what would result from your own utter want of moral emotion. I am just and honest, not because I expect to live in another world, but because, having felt the pain of injustice and dishonesty toward myself, I have a fellow feeling with other men who would suffer the same pain if I were unjust or dishonest toward them. Why should I give my neighbor short weight in this world because there is not another world in which I should have nothing to weigh out to him? I am honest because I don't like to inflict evil on others in this life, not because I am afraid of evil to myself in another. The fact is I do *not* love myself alone, whatever logical necessity there may be for that in your creed. I have a tender love for my wife and children and friends, and through that love I sympathize with like affections in other men. It is a pang to me to witness the sufferings of a fellow being, and I feel his suffering the more acutely because he is mortal—because his life is so short, and I would have it, if possible, filled with happiness and not misery. Through my union and fellowship with the men and women I *have* seen I feel a like, though a fainter, sympathy with those I have not seen; and I am able so to live in imagination with the generations to come that their good is not alien to me, and is a stimulus to me to labor for ends which may not benefit myself, but will benefit them." No reader, we imagine, of George Eliot's poetry will fail to recognize in the sentiment just quoted a distinct foreglam of the lines in which she has given such eloquent expression to that sense of human solidarity, that self-devotion to the elevation of the race, that sublimated altruism of which her own life was a magnetic embodiment, and which the goal-thirsts would substitute for the egoistic craving for individual survival in another world than this:

> Oh let me live in the short invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence, live
> In pulses stirred to generosity
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For base mendacity, in all thoughts that shake
> Both high and low, in all that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistance urge man's search
> To vaster issues.

We find the same line of thought upon which the author had entered in the passage reproduced above pursued farther in the following paragraph from "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness." Continuing her reply to those who like Dr. Young in the last century and Mr. Mallock in our own think they can discern the ruin of civilization in the eclipse of Christianity, George Eliot says: "It is possible that you may prove that the brute, to sell your country, to lie, to steal, to slay your father-land, according to the orthodox moralists, would be the highest outcome of agnosticism, if you were not afraid of some disagreeable consequences from the criminal laws of another country. In the world I could conceive motive but my own worldly interest, or the gratification of my animal desire. I have not observed that nonesthesis, treachery and parricide are the direct way to happiness and comfort on earth. And I should say that if you feel no motive to common morality but your fear of actions that are in heaven, you are decidedly a man for the police on earth to keep their eye upon, since it is matter of world-old experience that fear of distant consequences is a very inefficient barrier against the rush of immediate desire. Fear of consequences is no your foundation of virtue, which will hardly stand against half a dozen other forms of egoism bearing down upon it. And in opposition to your theory that a belief in immortality is the only source of virtue, I maintain that, so far as moral action is concerned, so that it shall be free from the emotion which prompts it is not truly moral—is still in the stage of egoism, and has not yet attained the higher development of sympathy. In proportion as a man would care less for the rights and welfare of his fellow if he did not believe in a future life, in that proportion is his action in relation to the rights of justice and benevolence; as the musician who would care less to play a sonata of Beethoven's thoroughly in solitude than in public where he was to be paid for it, is wanting in genuine enthusiasm for music."

We must take leave to make one more quotation from this essay, for in the lines which follow George Eliot has outlined some of the fine organisms of the sympathetic or altruistic spirit whose historical and prospective evolution has recently been traced in detail by Mr. Herbert Spencer in his "Data of Ethics." Thirty years ago Miss Evans suggested that for certain elements of virtue which are of paramount importance to intellectual minds, "a delicate nervous organization, a rapid perception of the feelings of others, and a sympathetic imagination in the joys and sorrows of our fellow men, a magnanimous acceptance of privation or suffering for ourselves when it is the condition of good to others—in a word, the extension and intensification of our sympathetic nature, it is to an extreme degree important that "they have no more direct relation to the belief in a future state than the interchange of sympathy in the human has to the plurality of worlds. Nay, to us," continues Miss Evans, "it is conceivable that in some minds the deep conviction of immortality may be an impediment—that we are here for a little while, and then vanish away, that this earthly life is all that is given to our loved ones, and to our many suffering fellow men—dwells nearer the fountains of moral emotion than does the conception of exhaustless bliss. Surely it ought to be a welcome fact if the thought of *reality* as well as of immortality be favorable to virtue. Do writers of sermons and religious novels prefer that men should be vicious in order that there may be a more evident political and social necessity for pulpit discourses and clerical functions? Because learned gentlemen are theological, are we to have no more simple honesty and good will? We can imagine that the proprietors of a patent water supply have a dread of common springs; but, for our own part, we think it would be a much greater security against a lack of fresh water or of pure morality. To us it is a matter of unmixed rejoicing that this latter necessary of healthful life is independent of theological ink, and that its evolution is insured in the interaction of human souls as certainly as the evolution of science or of art, with which, indeed, it is but a twin ray, melting into them with undefinable limits."

III.

It is in the delightful paper entitled "Woman in France—Madame De Sablé," that Miss Evans propounds a theory of which her own achievements were to supply the most impressive illustration. After pointing out that, with a few remarkable exceptions, the feminine literature of Britain had been hitherto made up of books which could be safely left to writers by men, she pronounces it, nevertheless, "an immense mistake to maintain that there is no sex in literature." She concedes that science has no sex; that the mere knowing and reasoning faculties, if they act correctly, must go through the same process, and arrive at the same result. But she adds that "in art and literature, which imply the action of the entire being, in which every fibre of the nature is engaged, in which every peculiar modification of the individual makes itself felt, woman has something specific to contribute. Under every imaginable social condition she will necessarily have a class of sensations and emotions—the material ones—which must remain unknown to man; and the fact of her comparative physical weakness, which, however it may have been exaggerated by a vicious civilization, can never be disregarded, introduces a distinctive feminine condition into the wonderous chemistry of the affections and sentiments, which inevitably gives rise to distinctive forms and combinations. A certain amount of psychological difference between man and woman necessarily arises out of the differences of sex, and, instead of being destined to vanish before an impossible dogma of woman's intellectual and moral nature, will be a permanent source of variety and beauty as long as the tender light and dewy freshness of morning affect us differently from the strength and brilliancy of the midday sun." But while she thus affirms the existence of sex in literature, she admits, as we have said, that it had been very inadequately exemplified by feminine writers in England. She contends, indeed, that in France alone woman has had a vital influence on the development of literature; in France alone the genius of woman has passed like an electric current through the language, making crisp and definite what is elsewhere heavy and blurred; in France alone, if the writings of women were swept away, a serious gap would be made in the national history." In a character of this, Miss Evans, who alone of the English or French novelists has brought to her work the resources of a thorough scientific as well as literary education, that she is not content with the historical causes which have been assigned for the earlier and more abundant manifestation of womanly intellect in France, but seeks for a physiological explanation of the phenomenon. She gives due weight to such secondary agencies as the part played in French society by the salon and the unwholesome excitation resulting from the laxity of opinion and practice with regard to the marriage tie which disguished the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. But she would ascribe the primary cause in the physiological characteristics of the Gallic race the small brain and vivacious temperament which permit the Gallic woman of to-day to sustain the imperative activity required for intellectual creativeness; while, on the other hand, the larger brain and slower temperament of the English and Germans are, in the womanly organization, generally dreamy and passive. The type of humanity in the latter may be grander, but there is a larger sum of conditions to produce a perfect specimen. Throughout the animal world, the higher the organization the more frequent is the departure from the normal form; we do not often see imperfectly developed or ill-made insects, but we rarely see a perfectly developed, well-made man. And thus the physique of a woman may suffice as the substratum for a superior Gallic mind, but is too thin a soil for a superior Teutonic one." These and the lines which immediately follow are read with peculiar interest when we remember that the brain and temperament of the writer belonged to a distinctively Teutonic type, and that in herself were intent, although as yet she knew it not, all the conditions designated by herself as requisite for artistic composition of a high order. "Our literary," she continues, "is borne out by the fact that, among our literary women, those who have distinguished themselves by literary production more frequently approach the Gallic than the Teutonic type; they are intense and rapid, rather than comprehensive. The woman of large capacity can seldom rise beyond the absorption of ideas; her physical conditions refuse to support the energy required for spontaneous activity; the voltaic pile is not strong enough to produce crystallizations; phantasms of great ideas float through her mind, but she has not the spell which will arrest them and give them fixity. This, more than unfavorable and external circumstances, is, we think, the reason why woman has not yet contributed any new form to art, any discovery in science, any deep-searching inquiry in philosophy. The necessary physiological conditions are not present in her. That, under more favorable circumstances in the future, these conditions may prove compatible with the feminine organization it would be rash to deny." What the more auspicious environment is to which George Eliot looked forward for the physiological invigoration and stimulation needed for the enlarged activity of the feminine intellect we shall find indicated in the concluding paragraph of the same dissertation. If, in the seventeenth century, women in France became superior, at all events, to contemporary persons of their sex in other countries, this was unquestionably because they were admitted to a common fund of ideas, and to common objects of interest with men. "This must ever be," says Miss Evans, "an essential condition at once of true womanly culture and of true social well-being. We have no faith in feminine conversazioni where ladies are eloquent on Apollo and Mars, though we sympathize with the yearning activity of faculties which, deprived of their proper material, waste themselves in weaving fabrics out of cobwebs. Let the whole field of reality be laid open to woman as well as to man, and then that which is peculiar in her mental modification, instead of being, as it is now, a source of discord and repulsion between the sexes, will be found to be a necessary complement to the truth and beauty of life. Then we shall have that marriage of minds which alone can blend all the hues of thought and feeling in one lovely rainbow of promise for the harvest of human happiness."

IV.

The essay on "The Natural History of German Life" is prefaced by some general remarks which prove how thoroughly alive the writer already was to the capital shortcoming in the works of all the first-rate English novelists, even Fielding—the failure to portray, or at least to adequately portray, the lives of hard-working people, the term being understood to comprehend not only laborers and operatives, but also small shopkeepers, and the humbler citizens in these so-called liberal professions. The defect was a grave one, if, as the poet of George Eliot, and as we shall see, the urgent necessity and prime importance of directing artistic effort to this end were affirmed by her years before her first story was published. "How little," she wrote in 1856, "are the real characteristics of the working classes known to those who are given to theorizing! How little has their natural history been studied." Adverting to the untruthfulness of the pictorial as well as the literary transcripts of popular life, she points out that even those "painters who aim at giving the exact type of their scenes, who are far above the effeminate fastidiousness of the keepsake style, treat their subjects under the influence of traditions and prepossessions rather than of direct observation. The notion that peasants are jovial, that the typical moment to represent a man in a smock frock is when he is laughing a coarse laugh showing a row of sound teeth, that cottage mothers are usually buxom, and village children necessarily rosy and merry, are prejudices difficult to dislodge from the artistic mind which looks for its subjects into literature instead of life." She then asks the question, "Is not a man who has seen much of actual ploughmen thinks them jocund; no one who is well acquainted with the English peasantry can pronounce them merry. The slow gaze, in which no sense of beauty beams, no humor twinkles, the slow utterance, and the heavy, clodhopping walk, remind one rather of that melancholy animal, the camel, than of the sturdy countryman, with striped stockings, red waistcoat, and hat aside, who, in pictures and books, represents the traditional English peasant." And again: "The conventional country man of the stage, who picks up pocket-books and never looks into them, and who is too simple even to know that honesty has its opposite, represents the still lingering mistake that an unintelligible dialect is a guarantee for ingenuousness, and that slouching shoulders indicate an upright disposition. It is quite true that a thresher is likely to be innocent of any adroit arithmetical cheating; but he is not the less likely for his ignorance to make barley corn in his shoes and nought in a rupee in writing begging letters, but he is quite capable of ogling the dairy maid into filling his small-beer bottle with ale. The selfish instincts are not subdued by the sight of buttercups nor is integrity the fruit established by the cows and clover. Hodges was right, therefore, so far as the comic types of humor which he must be held to have contemplated are concerned, when he maintained that they appeal not to sympathy, but to the opposite feeling. This important distinction is made eloquent by Miss Evans. Thus we read that "some confusion as to the nature of humor has been created by the fact that those who have written most eloquently on it have dealt almost exclusively on its higher forms, and have defined humor in general as the blending of the perception of incongruous elements in human nature and life—a definition which only applies to its later development. A great deal of humor may coexist with a great deal of barbarism, as we see in the middle ages; but the strongest flavor of the humor in such cases is derived from sympathy, but not unmixed with the superior egoism or intolerance. * * * Again, it is impossible to deny a high degree of humor to many practical jokes, but no sympathetic nature can enjoy them. Strange as the genealogy may seem, the original parentage of that wonderful and beautiful creature, fancy, philosophy, and feeling which constitutes modern humor was probably the cruel mockery of a savage at the writhings of a suffering enemy—such is the tendency of things toward the good and beautiful on this earth." And then follows some admirable discriminations and antitheses: "Probably the reason why high culture demands more complete harmony with its moral sympathies in humor than in wit is, that humor is in its nature more prolix—that it has not the direct and irresistible force of wit. Wit is an electric shock which takes us by violence quite independently of our predominant mental disposition; but humor approaches us more deliberately, and leaves us masters of ourselves. Hence it is that while coarse and cruel humor has almost disappeared from contemporary literature, coarse wit is still tolerated in the marketplace, and not help laughing at a coarse bon mot, or a lacerating personality, if the 'shock' of the witticism is a powerful one; whereas mere fun will have no power over them if it jar on their moral taste. Hence, too, it is that while wit is permanent, humor is liable to become superannuated." Assuredly these distinctions are deftly drawn, and many an author that we know of would have looked back on the performance with the feminine self-complacency that deems its offspring incapable of improvement; but neither here nor in her novels does George Eliot betray a trace of weakness in her conclusions. At all times her single object seems to be to discover and communicate the precise truth. In the instance before us she hastens to interpose the caveat that, "as is usual with definitions and classifications, this distinction between wit and humor is not exactly represent the actual fact. Like all other species, wit and humor overlap and blend with each other. There are bons mots, like many of Charles Lamb's, which are a sort of facetious hybrids, we hardly know whether to call them witty or humorous; contrariwise there are rather lengthy discriptions or narratives which, like Voltaire's 'Micromegas,' would be more humorous if they were not so sparkling and antithetic, so pregnant with suggestion and satire, that we are obliged to call them witty. We rarely find wit untempered by humor, or humor without a spice of wit; and sometimes we find them both united in the highest degree in the same mind, as in Shakespeare and Molière. A happy conjunction is for wit is apt to be cold, and thin-lipped, and Mephistopheles, in men who have no relish for humor, whose lungs do never crow like chanticleer at fun and drollery." We may remark parenthesis that the same conjunction has been frequently embodied on George Eliot's canvas, as, for example, in the figure of Mrs. Poyser. On the other hand, it is conceded by Miss Evans that "broad-faced, rollicking humor needs the refining influence of wit. Indeed, it may be said that there is no really fine writing in which wit has not an implicit, if not an explicit, action. The wit may never rise to the surface, it may never flame out into a witticism; but it helps to give brightness and transparency, it imparts the flavor of mind, it warns off from flights and exaggerations which verge on the ridiculous—in every genre of writing it preserves a man from thinking that he has *genius*. And it is eminently needed for this office in humorous writing; for, as humor has no limits imposed on it by its material, no law but its own exuberance, it is apt to become preposterous and wearisome unless checked by wit, which is the enemy of all monotony, of all lengthiness, of all exaggeration."

Passing from abstract discussion to concrete illustrations, Miss Evans would recognize in the typical Frenchman and the typical German the nearest approaches made by nature to a complete analysis in which wit is as thoroughly exhausted of humor as possible, and humor is as bare as possible of wit. Thus Voltaire, the intensest example of pure wit, fails in most of his fictions from his lack of humor," while, on the other hand, Jean Paul, the greatest of German humorists, being deficient in sense of measure and fastidiousness of taste, is intolerable to many readers, and frequently tiresome to all." From this remark the transition is easy to the specific subject of Miss Evans's review, Henry Heine, who, although a German, had wit enough to make him brilliant among the most brilliant Frenchmen. For Miss Evans's estimate of Heine we must refer the reader to the essays, now for the first time reprinted in book form, though we may observe that it seems to us the most appreciative and satisfactory that has been made by any English student of Heine, with the possible exception of Mr. Matthew Arnold. It has not sufficed to induce us to depart from our purpose to indicate Miss Evans's opinions of the various authors reviewed by her in the *Westminster*. We have sought merely to direct attention to those fundamental convictions, deliberate preferences and disciplined tastes that composed the standard of human conduct and literary accomplishment by which George Eliot tested the life and work of others, and to which she conformed her own. We should add that in an essay which we are obliged to leave unnoticed, the article on "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," readers and writers of prose fiction will discover not a few sagacious precepts and admonitions which the author was afterward to enforce by her example.

Looking back over the whole ground covered by these admirable papers, we are at no loss to understand why George Eliot should have made it a rule to read no criticisms on her novels or stories. She had nothing to learn from critics. She was justified in assuming that not one of those who took upon themselves to appraise her achievements had given half of the time, or a tithe of the intellect, to the determination of the right aims and processes of the English novel which, as these reviews attest, she had herself expended on that object before venturing upon that form of composition which Fielding termed the modern epic.

M. W. H.

EASTER AMONG THE MELCHITES.

The Peculiar Services of a Branch of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine.

HAIFA, Palestine, April 2.—The population of Haifa, which amounts to about 7,000 souls, consists, so far as religious distinctions are concerned, of Moslems, Roman Catholics—here called "Latins"—Orthodox Greeks, and Greek Catholics, or Melchites. Of these the latter are the most numerous. This town may be considered the stronghold of the Melchites Schismatics. They are more influential here than in any other town in Syria. They compose two-thirds of its entire population. Originally Orthodox Greek, they owe their origin to the missionary efforts of Romish priests and Jesuits during the last two centuries. As the object has been to gain partisans, more pains have been taken to obtain nominal submission to the authority of the Pope than any real change of doctrine or ritual. To this day, Lazarists, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Jesuits are active in their efforts to make proselytes to this sect from the Orthodox Greek Church. They allow them to retain their independence of Rome in many particulars. Thus it is governed by a Patriarch at Damascus who owes allegiance to the Pope. Mass is celebrated in Arabic, they administer the sacrament in both kinds, they retain their Oriental calendar and their priests may be married men, though they may not marry after ordination. They differ from the Orthodox Greek Church in this, that they take the Occidental view of the procession of the Holy Spirit. They believe in Purgatory, they eat fish in Lent, and acknowledge the Papal supremacy. Otherwise they have made no change in passing from one jurisdiction to the other. As perverts they are naturally intensely hated by the Orthodox Greeks, and when disturbances take place between Moslems and Christians, the Greek orthodox are generally to be found siding with the Moslems against Roman Catholics and Melchites.

To this sect belong some of the wealthiest and most aristocratic families in Syria. As the ordinary traveller is not often brought into contact with them, I was not sorry for the opportunity which my residence furnished me of witnessing their Easter observances. At midnight on the Saturday preceding Easter Sunday the festival is announced by a great consumption of gunpowder. An uproar which would do credit to a prolonged skirmish lasts till the early mass. The Melchite church is the largest and most imposing in Haifa. It is enclosed in a courtyard, round one side of which runs a balcony. At an early hour on Sunday morning, the whole population turns out in its grandest attire. The men wear short embroidered jackets, with long sleeves slashed to the elbow, waistcoats of brilliant colors and innumerable buttons, bright-colored sashes, and baggy trowsers. The women are in flowing white robes, which, drawn over their heads, are held under their chins, only partially concealing their gay head-dresses, sparkling with coins, and their richly cut vests, gaudy with gold or silver embroidery. The children are especially subjects of decoration in costume, and strut about in the brightest of garments, plentifully ornamented with gold lace and flowers.

The church is so long to the church is tolerably crowded as we force our way along until we suddenly meet a loud-voiced procession, the priests accompanied by choristers keeping up a discordant nasal chant as they march round the church with the image of the Saviour on a crucifix, with red and green banners and with swinging censers, followed by a miscellaneous crowd, all carrying tapers. This occurs three times. Afterward the church square fills with a noisy crowd of men. The windows and housetops which command a view of it are filled with Moslem spectators who are not unwilling to mingle freely with the men. On the stairs leading to the housetops are clustered the tawdrily dressed little girls upon whom no such restriction is imposed, and then, if I may be pardoned the expression, the religious fun may be said to begin. Parties are seen waiting for squibs, cracker pistols, and gunpowder, all the superior of which deafened. The men form themselves in a circle so large that it fills the whole court yard, each man throwing his arms right and left round his neighbor's neck, and, lifting up his voice in a discordant scream which is supposed to be a chant, commences a dance, while the screams of all his neighbors. It is a dull dance, although noisy. Everybody makes ungainly steps in time, yelling and leaping at each other in an idiotic manner, and letting off their guns when impeded to do so by excitement. As far as I could make out, their songs were rather of an amorous than a religious character.

When this entertainment came to an end a seedy-looking character entered the arena with an open Bible in his hand. He proceeded up the stairs to the open balcony, whither he was followed by the armed crowd who had been dancing. These ranged themselves right and left beside him and he commenced in Arabic to read in a loud voice a chapter from the Gospel of St. John. When he had read a certain number of verses he paused, and about a hundred guns went off in the air, as he did so. Then he read on, while his audience loaded their guns. Then he paused again. They fired again, and so on all through the chapter, thus emphasizing as it were the most striking passages by periodical explosions of gunpowder. When this was over the church bell rang, and some priests came out and donned their hats and locks flowing over their shoulders made their appearance. I was told by a Melchite friend that there was no use in going to church now, as everybody intended to go and get drunk and pay visits, and indulge in more dancing. As the festival is a movable one, but that there would be a better mass on the following day, because the French Consul was going to attend in full uniform and everybody would be there.

This Easter festival lasts three days. The merriment increases and culminates on the last day, at the expiration of which everybody has given proof of his religious devotion by arriving at a blind state of intoxication. When in this sanctified condition disturbances not unfrequently occur between these Christian worshippers and the Moslems, in whose mind Christian religious ceremonial is inseparably connected with drunken riots and wild orgies. The Caimakkan or Turkish Governor of the town, fearing the strict observance of Easter according to their custom on the part of the Melchites might lead to these results, issued an order that on Easter Monday and the day following no firing was to be allowed, but the Melchites replied to the order, coupled with enforcing this order, that they had no intention of obeying it. A serious difficulty might have occurred were it not for the intervention of the English and French Vice-Consuls, who gave the Melchites to understand that the Turkish authority must be respected. It was in consequence of the timidity of the Turkish administration here that a Turkish Governor should have to appeal to foreign Consuls in order to secure compliance on the part of Turkish subjects with his own orders. When I attended mass on the following day there was no firing. With the exception of the French Consul, my friends, and myself, the whole congregation stood. Three priests officiated at an altar unusually tawdry, and a group of men and boys kept up a skentorian nasal chant from first to last. They were accompanied by an orchestra of two men, each of whom had a pair of cymbals and a kettle drum with which they kept up a most unsyntithing clatter. Incense of a copper bowl, that might on ordinary occasions have been used for salad. The incense swingers puffed fumes of incense into the faces of the French Consul and myself as being honored guests, and a priest brought him an open Bible to kiss, but abstained from offering it to me—on religious grounds best known to himself. Then he painted a good many people with holy water, using a piece of cotton put on the end of a wire. Then there was the usual procession and elevation of the Host, and the mass was over, the priests prostrated themselves and kissed the flagstones of the church, the sacrament was administered, the bread and wine being mixed together in a silver cup, which was held over an embroidered napkin stretched between two boys, so that none of the contents fell to the ground as the priest put the tessera full into the mouths of those who knelt before him with open mouths. The women did not seem to heed it, as they were all bottled up in a gallery, and could only see or be seen through a lattice work.

The service came to an end, and the people divided to allow the French Consul, who, with his cocked hat and gold lace, had been the figurehead of the ceremony, to march out in state. These French Consuls are all very pious men in Syria. The French Government, which has been ejecting monks and nuns and closing religious establishments, and making laws against religious instruction in France, is very particular about the religious principles of their representatives in Syria. Thus, the French Consul-General at Beyrout goes to mass on Easter Sunday with the Roman Catholics, the Easter Monday he attends mass with the Maronites, and on Tuesday he worships with the Melchites, thus dividing his favors equally and patronizing with great impartiality any heresies he may happen to come across.

As the correct thing among the Melchites after being at church is to go and "have something to drink," I followed the usual custom and paid a visit to my Melchite friends. The ladies of his establishment, in gorgeous attire, pressed beer, and wine, and raki, and sweetmeats, and cakes, and coffee upon our enfeebled digestion. We smoked narghilhes, and enlightened our minds upon Melchite manners and customs. As I passed through the outskirts of the town on my return home, I came upon the male Melchite population indulging in their circular dance and their disordered chants. They continued on the following day, stimulated by a plentiful indulgence in intoxicating liquors, thus to glorify God, and to celebrate the resurrection of the Saviour among men.

OLD MONASTIC RUINS IN PORTUGAL.

Father O'Reilly in the Church of Alcobaça—A Relic of Bygone Ages—The Work of the Prince of Essling—The Good Old Monks.

ALCOBAÇA, Portugal, April 10.—The founder of Portuguese nationality, Count Affonso Henriquez, laid in the twelfth century the basis of his country's moral and material greatness. The city of Santarem, in 1147, was deemed impregnable by the Almohade Moors, the then masters of Portugal and southern Spain. It was the bulwark of their power against the attacks of the Christian Spaniards from the north. Affonso Henriquez vowed, if he could obtain possession of this city, he would give to St. Bernard of Clairvaux and his Cistercians all the land between the mountains and the sea, and there build them a home at his own expense. That night the Moorish garrison, who little apprehended surprise behind their lofty and impregnable fortifications, were rudely awakened from their false security. At dawn the next morning the standard of the cross floated from the proud battlements of Santarem.

Affonso fulfilled his vow; a colony of Cistercians was obtained from Clairvaux, and Affonso in person accompanied the white-robed Frenchmen to the wooded slopes of the Serra d'Albarios, bidding them choose the most favorable site for their new home between the mountains and the sea. They chose a wild and desert place at the confluence of two headlong mountain streams, the Alcoa and the Baca. With his own hands Count Affonso dug a part of the foundations of the magnificent church and monastery of Alcobaça.

As with the parent of monasticism in the France of the seventh century, St. Columbanus, so with St. Bernard the custom was to select for his abode and that of his brethren the most frightful tracts in a hilly country, or, on the level, the reedy and fever-haunted marsh. His first religious home had been a remote valley in the Burgundian hills, so savage and barren that no husbandman would approach it. Bernard and his disciples soon made of this wilderness a land of fertile and beautiful fruit, it was called Clairvaux, "the bright vale." In 1153, some twelve years before the fall of Santarem, a like transformation had been effected at the very gates of Milan by a colony of Cistercians, which the republican city solicited from Bernard during his brief stay with them. The monks chose a tract all covered with a most unwholesome marsh, the haunt of malaria fever, serpents, frogs, and storks. drained it, reclaimed it, cultivated it, made it so fertile and so lovely that it, too, was called Clairavalle, in memory of the dear monastic home in Burgundy. Other Cistercian colonies were soon established by the neighboring free cities in various parts of Lombardy, and always in the marshy and unhealthy districts, the monks draining the marshy wastes, creating that vast system of canalization which is the life of beautiful Lombardy, inaugurating the culture and fabrication of wine, the breeds of domestic animals, the manufacture of cheese, all the methods of husbandry, till the face of the country was transformed, and the condition of the tillers of the soil had become most prosperous and enviable.

The town of Alcobaça, beneath the shelter of the monastery walls, grew to be a hive of industry. It arose as did the city of Bobbio in the seventh century, which Bobbio was founded by St. Columbanus and his Irish followers among the crests of the Ligurian Alps.

These monks of old were kind and generous masters in ages of military violence and lawlessness. Go among the country folk in the neighborhood of Alcobaça, and question them about the monks of old. They will tell you that with the white-robed Cistercians disappeared the prosperity of their town and its dependencies; that from their suppression dates the decline of agriculture, of industry, of all the mechanic arts, and the decrease of the population.

And now, just as the pilgrim turns his face toward the west, our guides take us to the great church, the most magnificent in all Portugal after that of Batalha. The modernizers have been at work here, too. The western front, like that of Santiago, has been disfigured by some wretched architect, who substituted for the glorious twelfth and thirteenth century Gothic his own abominable classicism. There are two ugly towers and a hideous gable, with ornaments I need not describe; but there is one of the most perfect mediæval porches to be found anywhere, despite some slight injury to some of its niches and statuary rising above each other to the figure of our Lord at the summit. The roseace towers, the deformed gable, and the beautiful porch have on one the same effect as a criminal mask covering all but the mouth beneath a crowned diadem.

We enter. The sun is pouring his many-colored radiance through the stained-glass windows, restored, like the entire building, by King Don Fernando and his son, Luis I. The whole interior seems glorified by the mellowed radiance. It is a wonderful interior. The nave is three times as long as it is broad. The nave is higher as the middle. For there is neither clerestory nor triforium gallery. Twenty-five massive granite pillars in the nave shoot up, like two rows of mighty trees, whose branches intertwine above, to form, to the right and to the left, its naves and its aisles. Above, as a wide canopy, suddenly transformed into stone. The vaulting must be eighty feet high from the floor. This height seems exaggerated because nothing breaks the perpendicular lines, and you have not a single element of comparison wherewith to measure the mighty whole.

There are twelve side chapels, one of which is interrupted midway by the Coro or monks' choir; but the eye ranges beyond the obstruction and above the high altar to the circular apse at the eastern end of the cross, where nine most magnificent stained glass windows shed their glory on the sanctuary. There is nothing like this elsewhere in the world. What must the effect be here in the early morning hours? What impression must it not have produced on the worshippers in the days gone by, when the nine altars beneath these nine windows of the apse were never without a priest saying mass, if I mistake, the vast church was full of devotees, men, women, and children kneeling, weeping and imploring the destruction of the vast and glorious pile, which all loved as the cradle of their former prosperity and happiness, of course everything which fire could consume perished in the flames. But, in the church at least, the work of the ancient French architect survived the impious rage of his nineteenth century countrymen. See how the bases and shafts of these huge piers are chipped and scarred by the heat. And so this accounts for the disappearance of the exquisite carved woodwork of the choir and Presbytery, the love offering of many a skilful hand.

Tradition and history say that vast as was this choir it could not contain, in the office hours, all the members of the community. They had to divide them into relays, succeeding each other day and night in the labor of prayer and praise. It was not, as we know, their only labor. Their swarms of white-robed toilers covered the neighboring fields far and near during the day; and at night, from the setting to the rising of the sun, the voice of holy song ever resounded here, continuing hour after hour, till the sun went down again. Nor were these sons of St. Bernard forgetful of his example. The monastery was a nursery of intellectual activity, as it was of material husbandry. The desecrated, blackened, and half-ruined church remained, with the ruined monastery, in their sad condition till King Fernando devoted to them the rental and restitution his own private fortune and an equivalent fund. All these beautiful stained windows and much of the exquisite sculpture on the monuments we are about to examine are due to his munificence.

There are or were five cloisters, occupying together a space as vast as that covered by the great hospital in Milan. The portion nearest to the sacristy was the Hospedaria, where hospitality was freely extended to strangers. The cloisters suffered irreparably from Massena's barbarous order. Still King Ferdinand and his sons have succeeded in restoring some of them. The place is now a military barrack, and all the hospitality and charities of the Cistercians are things of the irrev