SOME NEW BOOKS.

Renan's View of Christianity.

HOW THE CHURCH WAS ORGANIZED.

When, a quarter of a century ago, M. RENAN began his labors, he expected that a sixth volume would conclude the series devoted to a study of *Les Origines du Christianisme*. By the sixth volume, which bears the sub-title of *L'Eglise Chrétienne*, the account of the evolution of the new faith is brought down to the death of Antoninus Pius, and at that time undoubtedly Christianity had become a completely organized religion. It possessed all its sacred writings, all its great legends, the germs of all its dogmas, the essential portions of its liturgy; in the eyes of a large majority of its adherents it was a religion by itself, detached from Judaism, and even opposed to it. Nevertheless, the author has found it useful and even necessary to supplement the six books in which he meant to comprise his work with a final volume, setting forth the ecclesiastical history of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and assisting us to take a last survey of the Christian community on the eve of that desperate struggle with the civil power which was to end in the conquest and radical transformation of the antique world.

Before we come, however, to that culmination of his history we should look heedfully at two points brought out with special distinctness in the sixth volume, to wit, the fusion of the scattered Christian communities into an indestructible organic society, and the misconceptions of the new religion entertained alike by the ignorant and intelligent classes which collectively engendered public opinion and inspired judicial action in the Roman empire. With regard to the primal organization of the Christian Church, it will be observed that M. Renan has been led by his investigations to believe that the Catholic rather than the Protestant congregational view is historically tenable. He thinks, in other words, that the primitive Christians supposed their presbyters and Bishops to derive their authority from Jesus by transmission through the apostles, and not from election by their congregations. It is also noteworthy that, touching the attitude of Roman public opinion toward the members of the new sect, the author by no means shares Gibbon's propensity to minimize the persecutions inflicted during the first two centuries. He believes that the atrocious sufferings which according to tradition were endured by the early Christians were real and not legendary, and he shows that no formal proscription of Christian tenets need be assumed in order to account for such barbarities, since Christians by fidelity to the fundamental principles of their faith, and in the practice of their holiest rites, would expose themselves to conviction or suspicion of the violation of legal principles which had long obtained in Rome, and would consequently fall under the appalling rigor of the Roman penal code.

I.

While the Church was developing its dogmas, it was at the same time making progress in discipline and hierarchical order. Like every living being, it displayed an astonishing instinctive capacity for making good what was still lacking to the firmness of its seat and the perfection of its equilibrium. In proportion as the hopes of a speedy ending of the world and of the Messiah's coming became faint, Christianity yielded to two tendencies: to adjust itself with more or less dexterity to the imperial system and to organize itself for long duration. The first Church at Jerusalem, the first churches of Saint Paul, were not established with a view to prolonged stability. They were conventicles of Latter Day Saints, fitting themselves, by prayer and ecstasy, for the advent of God. Now the Church felt that it was to be a city built to last, a veritable society.

The most singular evolution that has ever taken place in a democracy was now effected in its ranks. The *ecclesia*, the voluntary assemblage of persons meeting on a footing of entire equality, is preëminently a democratic thing; but the *ecclesia* or club has a capital fault, which causes every association of the kind to perish from disintegration at the end of a very brief term; this fault is anarchy, the propensity to schism. More fatal still are the struggles about precedence within the pale of little fraternities, founded on an altogether spontaneous vocation. Contention for the highest place was the most grievous vice of the Christian churches, that which gave the most annoyance to the mass of simple-minded votaries. An attempt was made to forestall the danger by assuming that Jesus, in like circumstances, had taken a child, and said to the contending parties, "Behold the greatest among you." It was averred that, on repeated occasions, the Master had contrasted ecclesiastical primacy, wholly fraternal in its nature, with the supremacy arrogated by the possessors of profane authority, accustomed to affect an autocratic tone. But this did not suffice, and the Christian community was threatened with a grave peril, had not a salutary institution rescued it from its own abuses.

Every *ecclesia* implies the germ of a hierarchy, an organization comprising a President, assistants, and a modest array of employees. Democratic clubs are careful to limit these functions as narrowly as possible, with regard to term and attributes. But this engenders a precariousness, the result of which is that a club has never outlived the circumstances which called it into being. The synagogues have had much more continuity, although the synagogual officers have never constituted a veritable clergy. This comes from the subordinate position occupied by Judaism for centuries; outside pressure neutralized the harmful effects of intestine controversies. Abandoned to the same lack of guidance, the Christian Church would undoubtedly have missed its destiny. Had mon continued to regard ecclesiastical powers as emanating from the Church itself, the latter would have lost all its hieratical and theocratical character. It was written, on the contrary, that a clergy should lay hold of the Christian Church, and substitute itself therefor. Speaking in its name, and presenting itself in all things as solely invested with a power of attorney, this clergy will prove the main source of its strength, but, at the same time, its gnawing worm, the chief cause of the future crumblings of the edifice.

History, I repeat, offers no example of a transformation more profound. There happened in the Christian Church what would happen in a club whose members should lodge all their powers in the hands of a committee and where the committee in its turn should abdicate in favor of its Chairman, so that afterward neither the elders nor the members in general would have any deliberative voice, any influence, any control over the management of the funds, and so that the Chairman might say, "I, in my own person, am the club." The *presbyteri* (elders) or *episcopi* (supervisors) rapidly became the sole representatives of the Church, and almost immediately afterward another and still more momentous revolution took place. Among the *presbyteri* or *episcopi* there would be one who, from the habit of taking the foremost seat, absorbed the powers of the others, and became the *episcopos* or the *presbyteros* par excellence. The rites observed powerfully contributed to bring about this concentration of authority. The Eucharist could only be celebrated by a single ministrant, which gave extreme importance to him who performed the office. This *episcopos* with astonishing rapidity becomes the chief of the presbytery, and consequently of the whole Church. His *cathedra*, set on a line by itself, and having the shape of a chair, becomes a seat of honor, the visible sign of primacy. Thenceforward every church has only a presbyter in chief, who, to the exclusion of the others, is called *episcopos*. By the side of this Bishop, we see deacons, widows, a council of presbyters; but the main step is taken; the Bishop alone is the successor of the apostles; as regards transmitted powers, the individual member of the Church is nobody. The apostolical authority, supposed to be transmitted by the laying on of hands, has stifled the authority originally vested in the community. Next, the Bishops of the various churches, entering into relations with one another, will form the Church, universal into a species of oligarchy, which will hold assemblies, censure its own members, decide upon questions of faith, and of itself constitute a real sovereign power.

In a hundred years the change was almost entirely accomplished. When Hegesippos takes his journey all over Christendom in the second half of the second century he no longer sees anything but Bishops; for him everything resolves itself into a question of canonical succession; the feeling of active life no longer exists within the churches. We shall show that this revolution was not effected without protest, and that the author of the *Pastor*, for instance, still tries to uphold against the growing authority of the prelates the primitive equality of the presbyters. But in the end the aristocratical tendency prevailed. On the one side we see the shepherds, on the other side the flock. There is nothing left of the primitive equality; henceforth the Church is only an instrument in the hands of those who guide it, and the latter derive their power not from the community, but through a spiritual inheritance, a transmission that, it is claimed, ascends in a continuous line to the apostles. We feel that the representative system will never be in any measure a law of the Christian Church.

In one sense it may be said that this was a decadence, a diminution of that spontaneity which up to this time had been eminently creative. It was evident that ecclesiastical forms and that all free manifestations of the Christian life would be presently arrested. Beneath the censure of the episcopal body such fountains of activity as the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the evolution of legends, the production of new sacred books would be dried up; the gifts of grace would be reduced to the official sacraments. In another sense, however, such a transformation was a condition essential to the force of Christianity. In the first place, a concentration of powers became necessary from the moment that the churches became tolerably numerous; relations between these small religious communities could only remain possible so long as they had an official representative intrusted with the function of acting on their behalf. It is incontestable, moreover, that, without episcopacy, the churches united for the moment by the memory of Jesus would have been dispersed. Doctrinal divergencies, differences in the turn of imagination, but above all rivalry and unsatisfied self-seeking, would have incessantly produced disruption and pulverization. Christianity would have ended, after lingering for some three or four hundred years, like Mithriacism and so many other sects to which it has not been given to vanquish time. Democracy is sometimes preëminently creative, but only on condition that out of democracy emerge conservative and aristocratic institutions which hinder the revolutionary fever from indefinite self-prolongation.

Thero was the real miracle of nascent Christianity. Out of the free and transient subjection of human wills, it evolved order, hierarchy, authority, obedience; it found means to organize the crowd; it reduced anarchy to discipline. Who wrought this miracle, far more startling than pretended deflections from the laws of physical nature? The spirit of Jesus, deeply inoculated in his disciples, that spirit of meekness, abnegation, indifference to the present, that single-hearted pursuit of inward joys, which kills ambition, that preference loudly accorded to infancy, those words incessantly repeated as they fell from Jesus' lips, "Let him who is the first among you be the servant of ye all." The profound impression left by the apostles also contributed not a little to the same result. The apostles and their immediate vicars exercised an undisputed authority over all the churches. Now, the episcopal body was supposed to be the heir of the apostolic powers. From this point of view, the apostles were looked upon as still living and governing after their death. The idea that the President of the Church holds his mandate from the members of the Church who have elected him, does not show itself so much as once in the literature of this period. In this way the Church escaped the tendency toward decay observed in all delegated authority. Legislative and executive authority may come from the multitude, but sacraments and dispensations of celestial mercies have naught to do with universal suffrage. Such privileges come from heaven, or, according to the Christian formula, from Jesus Christ, the source of all grace and of every blessing.

Never, in any proper meaning of the term, had the Bishop been elected by the whole community. The designation by the Holy Ghost, that is to say, the resort to electoral manœuvres, excusable by reason of their exceeding artlessness, was enough for the spontaneous enthusiasm of the first churches. When the apostolic age had passed, and it became necessary to replace by ecclesiastical decisions the species of divine right with which the apostles and their immediate disciples were believed to be invested, it was the elders who selected a presiding officer from their own number, and offered him to the acclamation of the people. As this selection was never made without a preliminary consultation of public opinion, the acclamation, or rather the vote, by a raising of hands, was really only a formality; but it sufficed to preserve the memory of the evangelical ideal, according to which the spirit of Jesus dwelt in the community at large. There were likewise two stages in the process of electing deacons. The nomination was made by the Bishop, but the approval of the community was requisite to give the choice validity. It is a general rule of the Church that in it an inferior has never designated his superior. That is what still gives the Church to-day, in the midst of the quite contrary tendency of modern democracy, such reactionary force.

It was in Paul's churches that this movement toward hierarchy and episcopacy was particularly perceptible. The Judeo-Christian churches, less full of vitality, remained synagogues, and did not culminate so promptly and positively in clericalism. It was accordingly by writings attributed to Paul, that men fashioned arguments for the doctrine they desired to inculcate. An epistle from Saint Paul was an incomparable authority. Several passages in the authentic letters of the Apostle enjoined hierarchy and respect for the authority of the elders. To have arguments still more decisive, three little epistles were put forward, supposed to have been written by Paul to his disciples Titus and Timothy. The author of these apocryphal writings did not have at hand the "Acts of the Apostles." He was conversant in a vague way, but not in detail, with Paul's apostolic journeys. As very few persons had more precise notions, he did not compromise himself much by this shortcoming, and the critical faculty, moreover, was at that time so far lacking that the idea of comparing texts for a controversial purpose occurred to nobody. Besides, some passages of these three epistles are so beautiful that we may well ask whether their author did not have at his disposal some authentic notes of Paul's, which he may have incorporated with his apocryphal composition.

These three little tracts (the two epistles to Timothy and the epistle to Titus), which evidently came from the same pen, and were probably composed at Rome, already form a kind of treatise on ecclesiastical duties, a code framed for the use of churchmen. A great thing—as we are assured by these writings—is the episcopal office. The Bishop is a kind of model of perfection held up to his subordinates. He must therefore be blameless in the eyes alike of the faithful and of outsiders; sober, chaste, amiable, benevolent; just, devoid of pretensions, yet dignified in his mode of life; hospitable, moderate, inoffensive, free from avarice, gaining an honest livelihood without recourse to discreditable means. He may drink a little wine for his health's sake, but he must only have been once married. His family, like himself, should be serious; his sons must be submissive, respectful, beyond the least suspicion of dissolute habits. If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? Above all things, orthodox, steadfast in the true faith, the sworn enemy of error. Let him preach the Word; in season and out of season let him be instant in exhortation. Neither must a novice be chosen for such functions, lest such too early exaltation lead him astray; nor a man capable of bursts of anger, nor a person engaged in a despised avocation. Even they which are without the pale ought to respect a Bishop, and have naught to report against him.

The deacons are bound to exhibit no less perfection than the Bishops; they, too, must be men of gravity, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers—sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well. For functions so difficult, experience is necessary; no one should be intrusted with them until after preliminary trial and a kind of novitiate.

Widows are an order in the Church. If any widow have children or nephews, let her learn first to show piety at home, and to requite her parents. She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, continueth in prayers and supplications night and day. As to the consoled widow, that liveth in pleasure, she is dead in the Church's eyes. These interesting but unstable persons were subjected to a kind of rule; they had a superior; every church by the side of its deacon had its widow, whose business it was to look vigilantly after the younger widows, and to exercise a kind of feminine diaconate. The author of the false epistles to Timothy and Titus will have it that the widow taken for this purpose must not be under threescore years old, must have been the wife of only one man, must be well reported of for good works, for the way in which she has brought up her children, for having lodged strangers, for having washed the feet of the saints. For such functions the younger widows must be discarded, seeing that, after devoting a certain time to Christ, their new bridegroom, they wax wanton against him, thinking of nothing but of marrying again, passing their days in idleness, wandering about from house to house, inquisitive, tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. "I will, therefore, that the younger widows marry, bear children, guide the house, give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully; for some are already turned aside after Satan." Widows destitute of resources are at the charge of the Church; but they who have kinfolk, must look to them for relief.

We see to what extent the Church already was a completely organized society. Each class of persons had its function in it, represented a member of the social body; every individual had a duty, were it only that of proving, to the admiration of the world, by his upright conduct, the force of his Master's precepts. To this end they counted especially upon the slaves. The latter were told that none could do more credit than they to the new teachings. They were counselled, if their master were a pagan, to hold him worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. As to those that have believing masters, they are cautioned to avoid the familiarities upon which they might venture under the pretext of confraternity, but rather to serve them so much the better. Of emancipation, naturally, we hear not a word. As to aged men, they should be sober, temperate, sound in faith; the aged women, likewise, should be in behavior as becometh holiness, and recognizable by their religious garb; they should not be false accusers, not given to much wine; they are to be teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to love their husbands and their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands, "that the Word of God be not blasphemed." Young men, likewise, are exhorted to be pure in heart, discreet, teachable.

As to the married women, their office in the Christian society is humble, but still beautiful. "I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

All Christians, without distinction of age or sex, are put in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men, being interested in the maintenance of the public peace, in order that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in godliness. Let them not be surprised at persecutions; it is the Christian's natural condition. The Christian ought to be the converse of the pagan. Men who follow their natural instincts are slaves of their appetites, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. The regeneration which makes of a man one of the chosen, is the fruit, not of any works of righteousness on his part, but of the mercy of Jesus Christ and of the efficacy of his sacraments.

Such is this little treatise, already wholly catholic in tenor, true type of the ecclesiastical spirit. It has been for seventeen centuries the hand book of the clergy, the gospel of theological students, the key of the spiritual policy followed by the Church. The base of this spirit is piety. Piety is the priest's soul, the secret of his resignation and his authority. But the pious priest has rights; he has the right to rebuke, to punish—respectfully, no doubt, when elders are the subject of reprimand, but still with firmness. "Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." Simple in his mode of life, asking but for two things—food and raiment, the "Man of God," as our author calls him, shall be an austere master, and often an imperious director. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren, the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters with all purity." You perceive by this time that the Christian society will not be self-governed. Individuals will be watched over and exposed to reprimand; they will not have the right to say to their fellow citizens, "Of what concern of yours is my behavior or my belief? I am doing you no wrong." The faithful will maintain that, by believing differently from him, you are doing him a wrong, against which he has the right to protest—an essentially illiberal conception, against which princes and laymen will, with perfect right, revolt. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." What could be less conformed to the principles of a polite society? The heretic has his own opinion just as you have yours, and it may be he who is in the right. Courtesy would even have us affect to believe so in his presence. The world is not a convent, and the moral advantages supposed to be obtained by censoriousness and tale-bearing bring in their train inconveniences far more serious than those which it is hoped can be avoided.

Orthodoxy in the Epistles to Titus and Timothy has made no less advance than has Episcopacy. Already there exists a rule of faith, a catholic sentiment, which casts off as dead branches all that do not draw sap from the main trunk. The heretic is a sinful and dangerous creature from whom men ought to flee; he has all the vices; he is capable of every crime; actions that are praiseworthy in the Christian priest, such as the endeavor to lead captive pliable women, and certain surreptitious ways of creeping into houses, are in him criminal machinations. The heretics that the author has in view seem to have been Essenes, Elkasaites, Judeo-Christian sectaries, busied with genealogies of Æons, imposing fastings upon themselves, and rigorous Mosaic distinctions between things clean and unclean, denouncing marriage, and, for all that, great corrupters of women, who are led away by divers lusts, and are at the same time won over by being offered easy methods of expiating their sins. We feel ourselves very close to Gnosticism and to Montanism. The proposition that "the resurrection is passed already" makes us think of Marcion. The expressions used with reference to the divinity of Jesus Christ are gaining strength, though they are still enveloped in some perplexity.

What dominates the whole is a practical common sense that deserves unstinted admiration. The ardent pietist who wrote these letters never for an instant goes astray in the dangerous bypaths of Quietism. He repeats, until we are tired, that a woman has no right to devote herself to a spiritual life so long as she has any household duties to fulfil; that a woman's chief duty is child bearing and child rearing; that it is a dereliction to pretend to serve the Church so long as she leaves anything unperformed at home. At the same time, the piety enjoined by our author is a wholly spiritual piety; it abides in the heart; corporeal practices, fastings, for instance, profit little. We feel the influence of St. Paul, a kind of sobriety in mysticism, and amid the strangest aberrations of the belief in the supernatural, an ample fund of uprightness and sincerity.

The composition of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus coincided, probably, with what may be called the publication of Paul's Epistles. The letters of the Apostle had hitherto been scattered, each church preserving those which had been addressed to it; several were already lost. About the date of which we are now speaking (A. D. 127) a collection of them was made, in which were incorporated the three little documents that were looked upon as necessary to complete Paul's work. The publication was made, no doubt, at Rome. The order fixed by the first publishers was always adhered to afterward. Two categories were formed, comprising, on the one hand, epistles addressed to churches, and on the other letters written to private persons. In each category the writings belonging to it were arranged in the order of their length. Before long, some copies contained the Epistle to the Hebrews. But the place assigned to this letter, in violation of every principle of order, and at the end of the volume, would suffice to prove that it was appended, at a late date, to the body of St. Paul's writings.

II.

Such were the worthy aims and admirable features of the organization which as early as the end of the first half of the second century had been imparted to the Christian Church. Now let us see what very different traits and motives were imputed to it by the careless or hostile glance of the Roman society in which it was growing up. To be just, says M. Renan, we should call to mind the prejudices with which the public of that day was inevitably imbued. Christianity was very imperfectly understood. The common people do not like us to insist upon distinctions, to live apart from them, to be more Puritanical than they are, to keep aloof from their festivals and usages. When men hide themselves it is always taken for granted that they have something to hide. In all ages secret modes of worship have provoked certain calumnies which, in each case, are the same. The mystery in which they shroud themselves suggests unnatural debauchery, infanticide, incest, even cannibalism. People are tempted to see in it a *camorra* organized against the law. The informer's calling, moreover, had, under the antique codes, notwithstanding the efforts of good Emperors to suppress it, an importance that it luckily has no longer. Hence a type of libels which were, so to speak, concocted in advance, and from which no Christian escaped.

Unquestionably everything was false in these popular rumors; nevertheless facts, ill understood, seemed to afford a basis for them. Certain investigations had turned out to the detriment of the persons inculpated. The Christian apologists do not deny this; their respect for adjudicated facts restrains them; but they ascribe the wrongdoing to dissenting sects, and insist that the delinquencies of a few shall not be attributed to all. The nocturnal meetings, the tokens of recognition, certain strange symbols, everything relating to the mystery of the Eucharist, and especially the sacramental phrases concerning the flesh and blood of Christ, aroused suspicion. The morsel of bread that the Christian woman ate privily before each meal may not unnaturally have been mistaken for a philter. A multitude of practices seemed tainted with sorcery, which was a crime punishable with death. The custom among the faithful of calling one another brethren and sisters, and above all the holy kiss, the kiss of peace that was exchanged without distinction of sex, at the most solemn moment of the session of the conventicle, could hardly fail to give rise to the most offensive interpretations in the mind of a public incapable of understanding that golden age of purity. The belief in gatherings wherein all kinds of intimacy and promiscuity were tolerated was necessarily engendered by such facts, distorted by sarcasm and malice.

The charge of atheism was still more formidable. Like parricide, this crime brought on the offender the death penalty, and it aroused rancorous excitement in all the votaries of heathen superstitions. The undisguised aversion of the Christians to temples, statues, and altars incessantly occasioned unpleasant incidents. There was no physical catastrophe, no earthquake, for which they were not held responsible. All sacrilegious acts, such as the setting fire to temples, were attributed to them. From this point of view, the Christians and the Epicureans were confounded, and their secret presence in a city was a source of terror to which men never failed to have recourse when they wished to inflame the crowd to riot. Thus it happened that the fires of hatred against the Christians were incessantly rekindled among the common people. The authentic actions of the martyrs show us that they regarded the mob of the great city with the utmost contempt and as the worst enemy of the saints. In the second century the faithful never regard themselves as belonging to the proletariat; they seem to have formed in the cities a humble but respectable middle class, very deferential to the authorities, and anxious to come to an understanding with them. To enter upon any defence before the common people appears to the Bishops a disgrace; it is only to the authorities that they are willing to submit arguments. How distinctly we foresee that the instant the Government sees fit to relax its rigors, Christianity will straightway come to an agreement with it! How plain it is already that Christianity will be enchanted to become a state religion.

It is a curious fact that the only section of the pagan society with whose opinions the views of Christians presented some analogy, was the group of the Epicureans. The term atheist was impartially bestowed on the disciples of Jesus and on those of Epicurus. They had, to be sure, a common feature, for both rejected, though on grounds very different, it must be owned, the supernatural puerilities, the ridiculous marvels, in which the people at large believed. The Epicureans saw in these things tricks of the priests; the Christians, machinations of the evil one. What aggravated the case against the Christians was that they were supposed capable of putting an end to local prodigies with their exorcisms and of silencing the oracles that gave fortune or celebrity to a district or a province. When Alexander of Abonoticos sees his frauds exposed, it is not surprising, he cries, for Pontos is full of atheists and Christians. The explanation terrifies the people, and for a moment restores to the impostor his popularity. He burns the books of Epicurus, and gives orders that the followers of the two sects shall be stoned. As a preliminary to the celebration of his mysteries it was the custom to cry out, If there is here present any atheist, any Christian, any Epicurean, let him go forth. He himself would say, Away with the Christians; and the crowd would rejoin, Away with the Epicureans. In the superstitious districts the appellation Epicurean was synonomous with a curse: like the name of Christian, it put a man's life in jeopardy, or made him, at all events, a social outlaw.

The Christians took advantage of the arguments of the free thinkers and the incredulous in order to deride the popular beliefs and combat fatalism. The oracles were an object of mockery to all people of intellect and of common sense; such persiflage was sure of applause from the Christians. There is an interesting fact connected with that Œnomaus of Gadara, a Cynic philosopher, who was enraged at being deceived by a false oracle and avenged himself in a book entitled the "Rogues Unveiled," in which he amusingly ridiculed as an imposture the superstition of which he had been momentarily the dupe. This book was eagerly welcomed by the Christians and by the Jews. Eusebius has inserted the whole of it in his "Evangelical Preparation," and the Jews seem to have placed the author on the same footing as Balaam in the class of the unintentional apologists for Israel and of the apostles permitted to appear among the Gentiles.

The Christians and the Stoics, who in reality resembled each other much more closely than did the Christians and the Epicureans, are never compared with one another, never confounded. The Stoics affected ho disdain for the forms of worship practised around them. The courage of the Christian martyrs seemed to them a stupid obstinacy, a simulation of tragical heroism, a set purpose of dying, which deserved only blame. These troops of crazy men from Asia, who came clamoring for death, annoyed them. They saw no distinction between them and those vainglorious Cynics who strove after theatrical modes of death, and had themselves burned alive to make the populace rave about them.

Assuredly there was more than one outward point of likeness between the Christian philosopher and the Cynic; there was the same austere garb, perpetual declamation against the age, sequestered life, unflinching resistance to the authorities. The Cynics, besides a costume analogous to that of the mendicant friars of the middle ages, had a species of organization, had their novices and their superiors. The latter were public professors of virtue, censors, Bishops, "angels of the gods" after their fashion; a pastoral vocation was ascribed to them, a mission from Heaven to preach and give good counsel, a mission exacting celibacy and complete renunciation of the world. In sober-minded persons Christians and Cynics roused the same antipathy by reason of their common contempt for death. Celsus reproaches Jesus, as Lucian reproaches Peregrinus, with having spread abroad this pestilential error. What will become of society, men would say, should this spirit gain the upper hand; should criminals look no longer with dread on the death penalty? But the immorality and gross impudence of the Cynics did not permit them to be confused in this way with Christians, except by very shallow observers. Nothing that we know of the Cynics justifies us in believing that, taken as a whole, they were anything but dissemblers and rogues.

It is undeniable that in a very large number of cases the provocation to martyrdom came from the martyrs themselves. But civil society does wrong in allowing itself to be led into rigor, even toward those who seem to challenge it. The atrocious cruelty of the Roman penal code will create the *martyrology*, which, in turn, will give rise to a vast legendary literature, full of improbabilities and exaggeration. Criticism, however, in exposing the lack of foundation for many stories of the sufferings of the martyrs, has sometimes gone too far in the opposite direction. The documents which were, at the outset, presented as the original records of the trials of the martyrs having been found, for the greater part apocryphal—the passages in historians, properly so called, which relate to persecutions being few and short—the compendia of the Roman laws containing almost nothing bearing on the point—it was natural that critics should approach the subject with the utmost caution. By a natural reaction men were tempted to believe that the persecutions were in reality trifling, the number of martyrs inconsiderable, and the whole ecclesiastical system, based on the assumption of cruel sufferings, artificial. We have gradually obtained more light upon this matter. Even about the most ancient Acts free from legendary exaggerations the persecution of Christians form one of the darkest and most shameful pages in the history of the antique civilization.

Undoubtedly, were we confined, in order to form an accurate idea of the persecutions, to the *Acta Martyrorum*, skepticism might have full swing. The composition of *Acta Martyrorum* became a species of religious literature, in whose production the imagination and pious super-excitation played a much larger role than did authentic recollections. If we except the letter relating to the death of Polycarp, the account of the sufferings of the heroes of Lyons the *Acta* of the martyrs in Africa, and some other narratives bearing marks of the most trustworthy character, it must be acknowledged that the records of this kind, which had too lightly been pronounced genuine, are only pious romances. We admit also that the historians of the empire are singularly barren of details with regard to the Christians, as well as many other matters. The real documents bearing on the persecutions that the Church has to suffer are the writings which make up the primitive Christian literature. These writings do not need to be the work of their alleged authors in order to possess authority on such questions. The taste for publishing writings of every kind under suppositious names was so widely spread at this epoch that a very large proportion of the books bequeathed to us by the first two centuries are of certain origin; but this does not prevent these books from being faithful mirrors of the period at which they were composed. The first epistle ascribed to Saint Peter, the Revelation of St. John, the fragment known as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement Romanus (even though it were never penned by him), the wholly or partially apocryphal epistles of Saint Ignatius and of Polycarp, the Sibylline poems that belong to the first and second centuries, all the original records preserved to us by Eusebius relating to the origin of Montanism, to the controversies of the Gnostics and the Montanists about martyrdom, the *Pastor* of Hermas, the Apologies of Aristides, of Quadratus, of Saint Justin, of Tatian, of Athenagoras, reveal on every page the pressure of outlawry and persecution that weighs upon the writer's soul, haunts him, so to speak, and shuts him out from any just appreciation of the situation.

From Nero to Commodus, if we except some short intervals, it may be said that the Christian lived with the prospect of a cruel death always before his eyes. Martyrdom is the basis of Christian apologetics. If we listen to the controversialists of the time, it is the proof of Christianity. The orthodox Church alone has martyrs; the dissenting sects, the Montanists, for example, make vehement efforts to demonstrate that they, too, are not destitute of this supreme criterion of truth. The Gnostics are outlawed from all the churches, chiefly because they affirm the uselessness of martyrdom. This is because persecution really was, as Tertullian would have us believe, the natural state of a Christian. The details of the *Acta Martyrorum* may, for the most part, be false; none the less was the frightful picture they unrolled before us a reality. Men have often drawn fictitious delineations of that terrible struggle which has gilded with an aureole the beginnings of Christianity, and left hideous blood stains on the finest annals of history; its gravity, however, has not been a whit exaggerated. Persecution really was a factor of the highest order in the formation of that mighty association of men which was the first to inaugurate the war against the tyrannical pretensions of the State.

Men die, in fact, for opinions, not for certainties, for what they believe and not for what they know. The mathematician who has discovered a theorem has no need to die in order to prove its truth. He runs through his demonstration, and that is enough. On the contrary, when beliefs are in question, the impressive proof, the most efficient demonstration of which they are capable, is to die for them. Therein lies the explanation of the extraordinary success obtained by some of the religious experiments in the East. "You Europeans," once said to me a most intelligent Asiatic, "will never understand anything about religions because you have never seen one of them manufactured at home; we see them, on the contrary, in the course of manufacture every day. I was a bystander when men, who were ultimately hacked to shreds and burned alive, endured for days atrocious sufferings, dancing the while, and leaping with joy, that they might die for a man that they had never known (the Báb); and yet these were among the most prominent men in Persia. If that speak to you, was forced to cut short a legend about myself that was growing up under my eyes, and to prevent people from having themselves killed for my name's sake." Martyrdom of course proves nothing for the truth of a doctrine; but it does prove the impression made upon human souls, and that is the one condition of success. The finest conquests of Christianity, the conversion of a Justin, a Tertullian, were brought about by the spectacle of a martyr's courage, of his joy in his death agony, and of the species of infernal rage that drove the world to torture him.

M. W. H.

THE HORRORS OF DRUNKENNESS.

Some of the Phenomena of Alcoholized Brains.

We were four. We sat talking in the lobby of a Denver hotel. It was 11 P. M. The talk was languishing, when the wide doors opening to the street were thrown apart violently, and a tall, heavily built man walked in. His soft hat was tilted backward on his head. His steps were uncertain. He was drunk. We recognized him as Dalton, a miner from the Snowy Range. Seeing the group sitting around a table, he came toward us, and, with a drunken smile, said, "Howda, boys?" Then, before we could greet him, he turned away, saying carelessly, "It is cat night for me. I may as well go see the creature." Entering the elevator, he disappeared.

Wondering what Dalton meant by "cat night," I asked one of my companions the meaning of the phrase. He replied, "A phantom cat comes to Dalton during the night following his third day of hard drinking. It is a warning to him to put on the brakes."

"Tell me of it," I said.

Complying, he said: "Dalton sprees. He drinks at long intervals, and never in moderation. When the wild desire for alcohol assails him, resistance is seemingly impossible. He turns his mines over to his foreman, and comes to Denver. He drinks excessively the first day, still more the second, and he turns himself loose on the third. He is a heavy and very powerful man, and can drink an enormous quantity of whiskey before succumbing to it. I have known him to drink forty glasses of liquor in one day, six of them before breakfast. By the end of the third day Dalton is very nervous. Soon after he falls into his first drunken sleep on the third night he always dreams that he comes into his room; that a noise, as though of something scratching on the carpet under his bed, attracts his attention; that, looking under the bed, he sees a large yellow tomcat, with a bristling tail as big as a rolling pin. The cat is tearing the carpet with its sharp claws. Indifferent to cats, or dogs, or any animal that walks on earth, he undresses and gets into bed. Instantly he is smitten with paralysis. He cannot move. His brain works without friction and is wonderfully clear. His vision is penetrative. He can see through the bed, and sees the cat on the floor in the corner. His clear sight pierces through the disguise of the creature and he realizes that it is an eye-destroying, flesh-eating devil. He knows that the fiend will come out from under the bed and jump on the footboard. Standing there with arched back and swelling tail, the creature will utter frightful cries preparatory to leaping, with distended claws, on his face and tearing out his eyes. Dalton becomes afraid of the cat. He tries to call for help. He strives to move. His efforts are vain. The cat leaps to the footboard, and glares at him with distended, fiery eyes. Again he struggles to throw off the paralysis. He cannot move. The cat, with a horrid cry, springs on his upturned face. Under the spur of this supreme horror he rallies, and, with an exhaustive effort, awakens. He is unnerved. He trembles like a timid woman. His heart beats quickly. It takes three or four days of perfect rest and solitude to restore his nervous system. He drinks no more for months."

"Does he know, while suffering from this alcoholic nightmare, that it is a nightmare?"

"Yes," my companion answered; "he knows it. But he also knows that if he does not awaken, and so prevent the yellow tomcat from getting in his work, the cat will kill him. He is in deadly fear of this cat, though he knows it is but an alcoholic phantom. And undereath his dread of the cat lies the fear of death resulting from alcoholism. The cat is only a faint shadow cast by the approaching jimjams, that stalk spectre-like in the vestibule of his brain."

"The warnings some drinking men receive are very strange," said the oldest of our party. "I know several men who are sprees, who have warnings, generally visions more or less horrible, but invariably the same, when they approach the wall behind which the jimjams lurk. Probably the most striking case is that of a gentleman who inherited his diseased craving for alcohol. He will not drink it, may be, for a year. Then he will put his business into such shape that he can leave it for a few days, and deliberately get drunk. For two days he devotes his energies to getting drunk, and staying drunk. He is not of the least trouble to any one when he is drinking. He shuts himself up in his room, and drinks alone. In two days he will drink a gallon of the best sour mash Bourbon whiskey money can buy. He always begins drinking in the evening. The third evening he goes to bed in a beastly state of intoxication. At about midnight his vision comes to him. He dreams that he went to bed, and slept soundly until awakened by a hard, white, flickering light. He lies awake wondering what causes the light, and hears a loud knock on his bedroom door. 'Come in!' he cries. The door is flung wide open and a man who has been freshly flayed stands in. The flayed man smiles in a ghastly manner and nods in friendly recognition. The flesh is gone from his mouth. His teeth grin mockingly. He stations himself opposite the bed and leans against the wall, his shoulders making a bloody mark where he leans. His bloodless eyes roll and his tongue lolls. The bedroom door remains open. My friend looks out of the door into the street. There he sees a long column of flayed men marching rapidly down the road. Stragglers drop out from the column and enter his room. When ten men have entered, his bedroom door closes. The flayed men, who are covered with fresh blood, walk silently around the room looking at him. They point their bloody fingers at him. At a signal from the leader of the silent band they all march out. Presently they return, each carrying a flayed and bloody corpse. The blood has dried on the live men while they were absent, and it flakes from them as they reenter the room with their ghastly burdens. The corpses are placed on the floor in a row, side by side. At a signal from the leader of the skinless horrors, they straddle the dead bodies, and bending over grasp them around their waists. Then straightening up, with the legs of the dead men between their own, they move around the room in a wierd dance, now advancing, now retreating, then circling around the bed, and always leering and grinning at my friend. After desperate efforts he awakens, and the vision disappears. It is his warning to quit drinking, and he heeds it, too."

Then spoke an ex-Confederate artillery officer: "Most sprees have visions, all of them horrible, that are nature's warnings to them to quit drinking. But there is another class of illusions arising from an unwise use of alcohol, which I suspect are much more common than is generally known. The men who suffer from these illusions are apt to conceal their troubles, being ashamed to confide them to their most intimate friends. I know of two cases that may interest you. They are queer manifestations of alcoholic disturbances of the brain."

We gathered closely around the table, and all of us, as one man, demanded the stories. The ex-Confederate officer said: "Johnson was raised on the Sea Islands. He married shortly before the war. He entered the Army of Virginia. His wife, to whom he was devoted, died shortly after he left her. After the surrender Johnson came West. He is a well educated, courageous gentleman. I will tell you the vision that invariably arises before him if he drinks at all. I will tell it in the first person, just as he told it to me. Imagine that Johnson is talking: 'Whenever I drink, I am haunted by a vision that arises before me as soon as I am asleep. It is this: My wife is by my side, her soft hand lovingly slipped in mine. We are walking up an oyster shell path toward our Sea Island home. Entering our house I realize that it has been deserted, and an unaccountable feeling of dread rushes over me in an icy wave at this discovery. Then my wife speaks, saying, softly, 'I am afraid.' Inst