

policy into history. The following is a summary of Ignatieff's views, as he explained them to Mr. Gallenga:—

"He was described to me," says Mr. Gallenga, "as 'the very father of lies,' and I received endless warnings against his Mephistophelian powers of fascination. Yet I could not even detect in him any attempt at dissembling. His hatred of Midhat Pasha, for instance, was always boldly proclaimed, and he was equally uncompromising in his denunciations of any scheme which could promise Turkey a prolongation of existence by social or political reforms. He hated the Turks and conspired to their destruction, no doubt, but never cloaked his designs under any hypocritical mask of a desire for their well-being or hope of their improvement. 'What inducement,' he observes, 'could he have to dissemble? He never forgot, as he spoke, that he had eighty millions of men at his back, to make good whatever he said.'"

In the very first interview which Mr. Gallenga had with Ignatieff, the latter launched out into a luminous exposition of the Eastern problem, as it presented itself to the mind of the far-sighted Russian diplomatist. The passage is long, but it is well worth quoting:—

"The question was to him 'clear as daylight, and always had been so,' even when grave statesmen stubbornly denied its existence, or felt confident that it was something in the clouds,—something that could be indefinitely, eternally postponed. Here is a city, he said, enthroned between two seas, on two continents, intended by nature and appointed by man to be the seat of empire, of a vast, world-wide empire, as it was thought at the time of its foundation, when man's instincts tended to the establishment of universal monarchy. The Turks took it in the high tide of their career, when they compassed the earth with their ambition, and it is now supposed to be coveted by that Russian Power which has overrun so large a part of Europe and Asia. That the Turks cannot long hold Constantinople, that they have no firm footing in Europe, are facts of which all men, and themselves first and foremost, are thoroughly convinced. The Turks came as an army, not as a nation; they conquered, ground, and crushed the subject races, but never governed them. Their sway was based on martial force, and it breaks down now wherever they find themselves in a minority. Their energies have been exhausted by sloth and gross self-indulgence. Any attempt at reform of their administration, even in military matters, is, in the opinion of all sound-minded men, utterly hopeless. They could stand no shock from abroad, least of all such an onset as Russia might at any moment make upon them. Russia, however, M. Ignatieff asserted from the outset and consistently maintained, meditated no such attack. From beginning to end he showed the utmost anxiety to demolish the argument which is, and has always been, raised against Russia with respect to her 'traditional ambition.' It is not true, he said, that the Czars at any time looked forward to the conquest and annexation of the European provinces of Turkey, or of her capital."

In Ignatieff's view, Peter the Great's "will" is a myth. Catherine II. did indulge in "a vague, baseless fancy" of establishing a Greek State, with Constantinople for its capital and a Russian Grand Duke for its sovereign. But that was the only occasion on which it ever entered into the plans of Russian policy to establish a new empire on the ruins of the Ottoman Power. The illusions of Catherine's reign have long since passed away, according to Ignatieff:—

"Turkey may have been to Russia what Cuba was to the United States of America. So long as the American Union was a slave-holding community, Cuba, as the only slave-market, would have been to the working Cabinet a priceless acquisition. But since the triumph of the cause of Abolitionism, at the end of the Civil War, that island, with its half-million of slaves, would be a burden and a cause of strife to the Americans, who now would never take it, even if it were offered to them as a gift by Spain herself, and with the world's consent. Upon the same ground, the Russians reason, the Government of St. Petersburg, whatever may have been its former views, whatever aspirations it may have cherished before the instinct of nationality and love of self-government spread even among the less advanced races, would now, for its own sake, shrink from the responsibility of subjugating to its sway twenty millions of subjects of various races, creed, and language, discordant on every subject except on the one of the antipathy which all of them—Roumans, Greeks, Slavs—cherish and openly evince towards Russia."

Moldavians, Wallachs, Serbs, Montenegrins, Russia, according to Ignatieff—who has here history on his side—"most powerfully helped to withdraw from the unbearable Mussulman yoke." But their gratitude would be turned into hate, were Russia to change liberation from the Turk into absorption by Russia. And this is what Russia would be obliged to do, if she were to take possession of Constantinople. That imperial city in the hands of Russia, would of necessity become her capital; and "can it be supposed that the Muscovite, who is now awakening to a proud sense of his nationality, would abandon his bracing climate, the hardy yet fertile soil of Holy Russia, wherein lies the compact strength of his colossal State, to expose himself to the enervating influence of southern regions?" The Emperor Nicholas, by the way, believed that the temptation here sketched out would be too strong for the Muscovite, and therefore, he proposed to save him from the temptation by making Constantinople a free city. Either reason is of course a serious one, why Russia should be disinclined to possess herself of Constantinople.

But what, then, does Russia want, on the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, if she wants neither Constantinople nor any

part of European Turkey? She wants two things, according to Ignatieff:—

"She endeavours to keep the Ottoman Empire together as long as it will hold, and she lays the basis of the new edifice which may at some future time rise on its ruins. In pursuit of the first object, she suggests to the Porte such broad measures of reform as may establish a *modus vivendi* suitable to the various races and creeds subject to its sway. With a view to future contingencies, she sanctions, if she does not encourage, the development of self-government in those provinces which, like Roumania and Servia, are no longer amenable to Ottoman rule, and whose aspirations to independence can no longer be curbed. Were the period for the dissolution of the Turkish Empire and for the expulsion of the Mussulmans from Europe to arrive, Russia's scheme would be to establish a confederacy of States in the Balkan Peninsula, possibly also including the Asiatic provinces on the Straits and the Propontis, which might have its centre on the Bosphorus, when Stamboul, Galata, and Scutari would be raised to the rank of a free city, or perhaps of three free cities, the whole community being erected with the sanction and placed under the joint protection of all the European Powers."

Such is Ignatieff's exposition of Russian policy in regard to Turkey, and it is very important just at present. We believe it to be a sincere exposition,—just because it is based on common-sense, and on an enlightened perception of the interests of Russia. There never was a wilder delusion than the notion that Russia has any designs on India. Russia, though she does not shriek about her "interests," understands them far too well to embark on perilous and unprofitable enterprises. And for our part, we earnestly trust that Ignatieff and his Government have really come to the conclusion that "the period of the dissolution of the Turkish Empire has arrived," and that, instead of a patched-up peace, they will propose some such scheme as the above. England, we believe, and all Europe might support it. It may not be the best possible scheme, but let Turkish rule be once abolished, and the subject-races be left to govern themselves, under the protection of Europe, and we have no fear for the consequences. We have occupied so much space already, that we have only time to add that Mr. Gallenga's book is by no means confined to the Eastern Question. It deals with a great variety of other matters, in a style which is both instructive and picturesque.

THE FIRST OPPONENT OF CHRISTIANITY.*

THE interesting analysis by Mr. Froude, in the February number of *Fraser's Magazine*, of the argument of Celsus against Christianity, answered by Origen, deserves a fuller notice than the slight allusion already made to it in these pages, or indeed, than any that our limits will now allow us to supply. The work it aims at reproducing would be one of the most interesting to our generation in the whole legacy of the past. When Mr. Froude says that the argument it contained "obstructed the progress of Christianity for about a century," he will not find many to agree with him; but every reader must share his belief that "no more valuable addition could be made to theological history than an account of the impression made by Christianity on the minds of cultivated Romans, while its message was still new." This valuable contribution to the history of thought he has done his best to supply. He has extracted from the tangled web of orthodox refutation and woven into a coherent whole, the scraps of disjointed quotation, now for the first time accessible to the mere English reader, which are all that remain to us from the argument of the first intelligent Pagan who thought the new superstition worth demolishing. And the value which such a work would possess for any age is much increased for a generation to whose eyes the strange eclipse that has come over the Christian faith seems to reproduce the dimness of its dawn. They are thus enabled to compare the similarities and the contrasts of the heathenism which confronted Christianity as an ephemeral upstart, and the heathenism that is in part its offspring, in part its long-trained enemy.

It may seem ungracious to receive such a contribution with anything but pure gratitude. We cannot, however, quite omit the ungracious part of the critic's office. Passing over the strange perverseness which translates ἀληθής λόγος, "true story," there not being a word of narrative, true or false, in the pleading of Celsus, which is generally translated "a true discourse;" we cannot omit all expression of our disappointment at the slight and inconsistent manner in which Mr. Froude has dealt with the surely important question of authorship. It has been the source of much controversy. The Celsus whom Origen answered is sometimes (Mr. Froude says generally) identified with a friend of Lucian's, to whom he dedicated one of his treatises, in token of their common admira-

* "Origen and Celsus." *Fraser's Magazine* for February. London: Longmans.

tion for the great liberator of the human race from the bondage of superstition—for Epicurus, “who was a saint indeed.” We cannot help thinking that the dramatic propriety of finding in the same man an adversary of the most spiritual of the Fathers and a friend of the Voltaire of his age has helped out the slender amount of evidence for the theory. If, indeed, we could test it by nothing but Origen’s assertions about Celsus, it would hardly be questioned, and its supporters have little more to say in its favour than asking us if a writer of the third century was not likely to know more about a writer of the second than any writer of the nineteenth. We are, however, as little convinced as if we were told that somebody was an Ultramontane Roman Catholic, and shown a pamphlet he had written to prove the Pope to be Antichrist. “Yes,” our informant must plead, to fill out the parallel, “he hides his dangerous doctrine artfully enough, but you can distinguish it, if you will read between the lines.” Surely we should all want to know the ground of our friend’s opinion, before giving it much weight. And this is just what Origen never supplies. Celsus, he says, has long been dead, and he hears that he has written other books, some of which he should like to see. This is not the tone of a man who has very satisfactory reasons for some improbable view of the person of whom he thus speaks, and it seems to us about as improbable that the same man should regard the Pope as Antichrist and be a devout Roman Catholic, as that an Epicurean should have written nine out of ten of the passages quoted by Origen. Of course, neither view is impossible; life is long enough for startling changes, and a certain amount of evidence would track the most contradictory views to the same pen. But the only certain evidence here is the apparent belief of Origen that his adversary is Lucian’s friend, and the identity of a common name. About twenty Celsuses are known to us in the first three centuries, and Origen’s view is so perplexing to himself, that in one passage (IV., 54) he declares himself ready to abandon it. Probably it would not need more justification to himself than the fact that some Epicurean Celsus might conceivably have written the work he was answering, and the temptation, common, we fear, to good men in all ages, to ascribe unpopular doctrine to their assailants. The belief as to matter of fact of fervent enthusiasm is no sufficient voucher for a theory which supposes a man to have held a particular creed, and brings forward in evidence a volume the greater part of which is diametrically opposed to that creed. However, we must allow that the opinion of scholars is divided on the question, and that the newest opinion does identify Lucian’s friend and Origen’s foe. Mr. Froude seems to us to side with one party in the text, and go over to another in the notes. Perhaps he thinks Origen’s Celsus might not be Lucian’s Celsus, and yet might be an Epicurean. That theory seems to us to combine the disadvantages of both its rivals. It is difficult enough to believe a man held one set of views, when every word in evidence proves him to have held the opposite. Still people do change their views, and if you have independent evidence of both, the theory may hold. But to allow that there was an Epicurean Celsus who was Lucian’s friend, and also a Platonic Celsus who was Origen’s opponent, and yet that this last-named Celsus held views like those of his namesake, and unlike all those which we know him to have expressed, and all this on the evidence of a man who knew nothing of Celsus but that he had long been dead, seems to us to go out of one’s way to hunt improbabilities.

“Well, but what does it matter?” the reader may ask. “The important question is, what did a heathen of the second century find to object to in Christianity, not how did he manage to reconcile these objections with other views, or *did* he reconcile them with other views?” That, we suppose, is Mr. Froude’s opinion. We think, on the other hand, that the view of the argument here set before us is due in a great measure to an erroneous view of its authorship. When Mr. Froude says that “the method of thought of Celsus was scientific, in the strictest modern sense,” he must be forgetting the opinions which we know Celsus to have put forth, and remembering only those he is accused of concealing. But the English critic, with candour equal to that of the Alexandrian Father, finds us in materials for his own refutation. He paints Celsus in his commentary as a prophet of our philosophic Agnostics, but his text reveals a true disciple of that thinker who of all that ever lived would have been their most strenuous opponent. “The spirit apprehends the things of the spirit, the eye apprehends the things of the eye,” is not the saying of one who would be welcomed as an ally by our physicists. The fine passage quoted by Mr. Froude (p. 159,—b) from which

we have extracted this sentence, is in every word a protest against his own account of the doctrine there expressed. Indeed, the premisses from which he draws the conclusion that the first attack upon Christianity was remarkably like the latest, and we that the two were remarkably unlike, are all accepted by himself. We may here, therefore, close the ungracious part of our task, and leave his own readers to judge between us.

A large part of our interest in the work of Celsus depends on the fact that it is the argument of a Platonist. If we took Mr. Froude’s view of it, we should regard it as a very interesting expression of an individual mind; but it gains largely in value if, and we could not do so if we took it as the work of an Epicurean, we may regard it as an utterance characteristic of its age. The second century was as far removed from being an epoch of enlightened Materialism, which we take to be the simplest popular description of Epicureanism, as any period with which we are acquainted. It was an age of mystic worship, of magical rites, of superstition, and of earnest piety. We cannot think that at such a time the Epicurean—that is, the cultivated Rationalist—would have considered Christianity worth refutation. It, then, would have appeared to him probably an insignificant variation on the mystic Deism generally prevalent, not more noxious than many other forms of the same disease, and probably rather less threatening. For the age of the Antonines represents a great pause in the development of the new faith. Christianity would be, no doubt, a very obvious phenomenon to any believer in this mystic Deism, to which it would probably present itself as a dangerous foe; but to one who stood outside the common belief in a supernatural order of things, an Alexander of Aboniteichos, an Apollonius of Tyana, were probably more striking types of the charlatan of the age than the introducer of new mysteries (so Lucian speaks of Christ), whose wonders were less obvious, and whose followers might not appear much more numerous. The disciple of Epicurus would have found much in the age to move his scorn, and the Christian would come in for a share of it, but hardly for a share sufficiently large to be made the representative of the superstition of the age.

The case, however, was widely different with the disciple of Plato. It would be by a slight distortion only that the demand for faith (which seems to have been the head and front of the offence of the Christians in the eyes of Celsus) might be regarded as an inversion of the great lesson the Platonist had learnt from his master,—to subject all common notions to the test of a rigid examination, to leave no formula unquestioned, no bundle of conceptions unsearched. To the philosopher, the Christian would seem to inhabit an inverted world. The lover of wisdom was to be deposed from his pre-eminence, and the supreme fool to be installed in his place. Truth was to be found not by the patient and earnest seeker after truth, not by the man who had purified his vision by contemplation of the eternal and abiding realities of the invisible world, but by the thoughtless, the untought, the imbecile. “Take away this preposterous demand,” the Platonist might say, “and what is left is a poor and diluted copy of my own creed.” What was distinctive in Christianity seemed an inversion of the lesson of Plato. What was valuable in it seemed a plagiarism from the teaching of Plato. It was thus divided between what was superfluous and what was supremely hurtful.

Nor was it on intellectual ground alone that Christianity would appear to demand this inversion of every principle of sound sense. The difficulties of Celsus were, in a large measure, the difficulties of the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The teaching of that parable seems to us fatally misunderstood, by those who take it as a mere warning against envy. No doubt the perplexities it suggests are brought out more sharply by the keenness of self-centred feeling, but they are not created by it. Whatever can be said in answer to these difficulties, as far as we see, is said by Frederick Robertson, in a short sermon on that parable, with a force implying the fullest sense of their strength. But there are many reasons why men should have felt these difficulties more vividly in the second century than in the nineteenth. When the great idea of Redemption has been before the world for 1,800 years, it influences a larger part of man than his belief. Christianity has entered so deeply into the heart of the modern world, that even where it is most completely rejected by the intellect, its moral standard remains, at all events for a time. And thus it happens that redemption is accepted as an ideal, even when no divine redeemer is supposed to have trodden this earth. Those who have ceased to believe it a work of God, still feel no doubt that it is to be the great work of man. Thus while the elder brother represents a

perennial phase of difficulty in the aspect of Christianity, his perplexities can never be characteristic of an age in which all that is good and all that is weak alike impel us to a tenderness for the sinner, the fool, and the pauper, of which no ancient could have had any conception.

And in no time were the difficulties of a faith that seemed to set wisdom and virtue at a disadvantage brought into such prominent relief as in the first two centuries of our era, for there never was an age quite so rich in the contrasts of good and evil. Marcus Aurelius in the highest and Epictetus in the lowest social position showed how much saintly wisdom may be common to the Emperor and the slave, and the gentle tolerance and wide sympathy of Plutarch light up the intermediate zone of life with something of the same spirit. A telling background was supplied by such men as Domitian and his flatterers,—he being the worst man that ever lived, according to M. Renan, but not much more despicable than the clever men who fawned upon him. Such contrasts are hardly matched in any subsequent period of the world's history. There was never afterwards a time when the black was so black, and there have not been many times when the white was so white. But the moral sense thus stimulated was, if we have rightly judged the attack of Celsus, the very thing which rose up against Christianity, and all the pure-minded and pious men we have named rejected or ignored Christianity, while one was its persecutor.

It needs a great effort of imagination to realise the astonishment with which the aristocratic spirit of the old world must have recoiled before a faith which would seem, and not altogether untruly, to take under its especial patronage the virtues of the slave. We cannot, with all our efforts, put ourselves in their point of view. In some indirect manner, the Christian ideal of humility affects every fibre of modern life. The conventional formulas of intercourse, among a thousand more important signs, bear testimony to the degree in which Christendom has accepted the low estimate of self as the right one, and we cannot imagine this an object of contempt. We do not, indeed, believe that the branch would continue to put forth leaves long after the stem was severed from the root, but that it does so for a time there is no doubt, and the Paganism of our day can give us no gauge of the contempt for lowliness in the age when Christianity began to set its ideal before the world. And the Platonist would add to this contempt, which, in his own way, he felt as much as any one, the intense dislike inspired by a distorted resemblance to an object of reverence. To resemble truth is the bitterest aggravation of error.

The fact that one of the chief adversaries of Christianity was the spiritual teacher of the old world, represents a state of things as different as possible from ours. The lesson of Plato was the illusoriness of the sensible, the permanence of the intelligible world. That which was discerned through eye and ear was a fading dream; time spent in its investigation did not only delay, but hindered the discovery of truth. He addressed the human race as a mathematical teacher who, on finding his pupils studying geometry by experiments on clay models, should warn them that they were setting up the inaccuracies of the eye and the hand as a barrier against the certainties of the mind, and making their investigation into the nature of form by a method which would teach them nothing but the nature of clay. And so far as the mathematician is concerned, the warning, if we can imagine it necessary, would be as distinct now as it would have been then. But as a type of the attitude of the Philosopher towards the investigation of truth generally, nothing can possibly be more remote from the point of view of our day. We have come to believe that the reports of eye and ear form absolutely our only data. We differ as to the extent of the inferences which may be drawn from them, and no doubt there are many who still believe that the true interpretation of a world of sense leads to the belief in a world beyond sense, but that any faculties within us communicate with this world directly is a belief hardly contemplated as possible in a cultivated mind. And from this cause, it seems to us, helped out by a blunder of Origen's, the critic of our day has read the modern belief of the order of Nature into a treatise where his own summary enables us to discern exactly that sense of the supernatural against which the modern belief is a protest.

But the Epicurean of our day, and the Platonist of Celsus's day, have a broad common ground, so far as they are opposed to Christianity. They both alike bring in an antithesis which it is hard, perhaps impossible, to combine in one field of view with the antithesis of sin and righteousness which lies at the root of Christianity. What has made the scientific world of our day

turn away from religion is not any antagonism between the theory of the creation taught by Darwin and Lyell and that which we find in the Pentateuch; it is the obliteration, by the influx of new ideas, of all that makes the background of Christianity. It is not possible for a finite mind to contemplate at once the idea of uninterrupted sequence, which is all that we mean by natural law, with that group of beliefs gathered up in the Christian hope of deliverance from evil, and from the standpoint of the modern man of science, tracing to their source the influences which have affected character, watching the link of cause and effect which bind wrong tempers and actions with physical misfortunes, the idea of sin disappears. But this is no less true of the Platonic beliefs which come forth in Mr. Froude's eloquent and skilful reconstruction of the "Truthful Discourse" of Celsus,—they shadow forth a view of good and evil that is out of harmony with the Christian view of good and evil. To a mind absorbed in the Platonic antithesis of the fleeting and the abiding, the antithesis of a kingdom of Heaven and a kingdom which is opposed to it must seem a radical misconception of the true good. Hatred, envy, and resentment are as real as love, pity, and forgiveness, and far more vivid. "The art of measurement," Socrates is made to say, in the *Protagoras*, "is that which would save the soul." There are few students of Plato, probably, who have not recognised in those words at different times a profound truth and a bitter mockery. A true view of the relative magnitudes of the various aims which distract the soul seems sometimes all that it needs to be at peace. At other times, and perhaps more often, this knowledge is seen to be that which would only increase its misery. To distinguish the permanent from the transitory, reality from appearance, significance from insignificance,—this is what is promised to the student of Plato, and in many states of mind it seems all we need. When we are longing for deliverance from evils that seem the most real and permanent things in the world of human experience, promises like these are the bitterest mockery of the spirit's deepest needs. But this last mood does not last always. And thus the truths of the intellect once hid the truths of the spirit, just as the truths of the senses do in our day. Thus also, we believe, they will hold their place, when they are no longer accepted as the whole or the largest part of that which the human spirit needs, in the words of the scoffing Lucian, to deliver it "from vain fears, needless desires, and groundless hopes, and to breathe into it the repose of secure and absolute liberty."

A POET'S LOVE-LETTERS.*

IN days when the wishes of "the pious founder" are not regarded with any superstitious respect, it is, we suppose, natural that the wishes of the poetic letter-writer should be regarded with none at all. As far as we can judge from the intense and acute horror with which Keats evidently regarded the discussion of his love by a coterie of friends, the notion of confiding his love-letters to the general public, though it were more than fifty years after his death, would have been simply hateful to him. He had all the dread which every man of strong nature is sure to feel of any contact between purely personal though very deep emotions, and the curious criticism of an indifferent world. Feelings the only meaning of which is individual, ought to be reserved for those for whom they have a meaning. When thrown into a poetic or imaginative form, they are of course so far transformed by that process as to be made applicable to the feelings of a thousand different minds under similar circumstances. But while they remain in the form of passionate avowals from A to B, and are marked by all the individual detail which applies only to the circumstances of A and B, there is a certain amount of indelicacy in inviting the inspection of all the world, from which Keats certainly, for his lifetime at all events, had the most sensitive shrinking. And though we do not say that the death of both parties, the fame of one of them, and the gulf of intervening time, do not diminish to some extent the unbecomingness of publishing this kind of correspondence, yet if we may trust the impression which it has produced upon the present writer, there is still something decidedly unbecoming in doing this offence to Keats's feelings, and Mr. Forman would have judged better, we think, had he recommended the owners of these letters to give them to the flames. In proportion to our admiration for a man of genius, should be our wish to consult his wishes as to the disposal of his private concerns. And what can

* *Letters of John Keats to Fanny Brawne, written in the years 1819 and 1820, and now given from the Original Manuscripts, with Introduction and Notes.* By Harry Buxton Forman. London: Reeves and Turner.