

successful a *brochure* as the letters of "Verax." A blight of oblivion seems to fall on everything more than a month old, and a mere *résumé* of the acts of the present Ministers would prove their gravest accusation. Some such method of propagandism would, I am convinced, aid in regaining that foothold we, as Liberals, have lost, and in enlightening the mind of the electorate as to its rights and wrongs.—I am, Sir, &c.,

Manchester, August 9th.

J. M. KELLEY.

MOUNTAIN AIR.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I can confirm the remarks you quote as to the effect of high altitudes on the working of the vital machine, having four years ago ascended Pike's Peak, in Colorado, and conversed on the summit with the officers who had wintered there as an experiment, at some 14,000 ft. elevation, in charge of a telegraph station of the United States weather office, whose forecasts are becoming so familiar to us. The pulse is normally upwards of 90, whilst violent exertion induces breathlessness, and occasionally bleeding at the nose. These facts must be pretty widely known, but what it occurs to me to mention as of special and confirmatory interest is that the eastern base of the Rocky Mountain chain is becoming a favourite health-resort with the Americans, being thought very beneficial in cases of chest weakness not yet developed into actual disease. The climate is dry and healthy, and the level of the plain being 5,000 to 6,000 feet above the sea, we have rarified air at ordinary temperatures, the effect of continuously breathing in which for a time is to "open the chest," deeper and more frequent respirations being necessary to absorb the required amount of oxygen. Who has not felt the exhilarating effects of breathing mountain air? At the very highest altitudes it is almost intoxicating.—I am, Sir, &c.,

J. CARRICK.

INVALIDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Judging from many years' experience in hospitals and sick-rooms, I am at a loss to know to what disease the writer of your article on invalids refers, when he speaks of unintermittent and very severe pain of body. The case of "one who knows that this fierce companion will not quit his side till the clay which gives it power is laid in the grave" is, I think, an imaginary one, for what would be the use of our doctors studying, if they did not learn how to relieve pain? The writer says, "an undying grief does not prevent faint gleams of pleasure when sleep comes on after fatigue, or hunger and thirst are relieved." I have never met with a case of bodily pain where neither sleep nor food has been able to be taken; that, at the worst, would be but short, as the body could not bear it for any length of time. Then, again, whatever disease I have met with, there have been some remedies to apply, or of what use are all our narcotics and opiates, our fomentations, poultices, liniments, lotions, and the rest? Would it not be better to let the patient remain quiet, than to tease him with all these, if in the end, the pain were to be unintermittent? Then as to getting used to pain. From my own observations, I am sure that those who have suffered most pain bear it better than those who have not had much pain, and having had it for many years myself, I am sure I do not mind it now as I did twenty years ago. I do not think it is just to say that the invalid whose nerves must be sheltered cannot be looked up to as a source of influence, or that he must not expect to be deferred to as a capable person. How many mothers of families manage their households from the bed they know they will never be able to leave! How many great and noble things come out of a sick-room, no one can judge so well as those who go from one to another; at least, that is my experience of fourteen years' nursing.—I am, Sir, &c.,

A TRAINED NURSE.

[Our correspondent hardly appreciates the obviously relative character of our language in relation to either point with which she deals. When we said that an invalid whose nerves must be sheltered cannot be looked to as a source of influence, we meant, of course, that as "a source of influence" such an invalid cannot be, and must not expect to be, at all what he might be, if no such allowance had to be made for the state of his nerves. And the same may be said in regard to what we said of pain. A life of pain alleviated or relieved only by opiates, is quite sufficient to satisfy the assumptions of the remarks referred to.—*Ed. Spectator.*]

POETRY.

IN LOVE'S ECLIPSE.

I.

WHEN death—the dreadful shadow of the earth—
Rests on the mortal face of Love's twin star,
Love turns dismayed, as if that shadowy bar
Could shut him off for ever in his dearth;
He turns within, and lo! a shy, new birth,
A spark of light from near, or from afar,
Pierces the darkness till, a fiery car,
It lifts him into light more wonder-worth.
Sad love! bewail not tho' you be bereft,
Nor faint not for the weary road you fare;
The spark enkindled when your heart is cleft,
The strength that grows from burthens that you bear,
Are gifts of grace for many that were left
Undowered, but for treasure you must share.

II.

O ye elect of sorrow and of love
Who bear for others' weal a double strain,
And share the surplus of love's costly gain
With hearts his presence doth more feebly move,
Count not your grief's excess too far above
The worth of those you serve, nor all disdain
The lesser pressure of the barren pain
The light of love in love's surcease may prove.
Pity the poor who are by God's decree
Your pensioners, and fear not, for your part,
To harbour love, how dear so'er he be.
O love that cometh, love that may depart,
The gates of life are set so wide by thee!
The lord of Love can enter where thou art!

August 11th.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

TO AN ICONOCLASTIC POET.

FIGHT not dead gods, nor think the incense-cloud
Which in our day hides the Eternal Face
Comes from a priestly hand. The heavenly grace
Thou see'st in a bare room or city's crowd,
Abides no less within the costliest fane
Which humble worshippers with patience rear
To speak their thought, and tell them God is near.
They have done what they could, and not in vain.
But love of wealth and of luxurious ease,—
These are our idols now. Poet, fight these!

Stepney, E.

J. E. S.

BOOKS.

A GERMAN HYPATIA.*

WE would preface our notice of this interesting novel by advising every reader to follow our example, and read it in the original. We presume that our ideal of a translation—that what has been said in the idiom of one language should be said in the idiom of another—must be more difficult than it appears, for we can remember hardly any instance in which this seems to have been even seriously attempted, and the translator of a learned work has recently even taken credit to himself for retaining the very rhythm of his original. Nobody must think that fluent and idiomatic German is represented by changing the German words for their English equivalents, and writing them down grammatically; but we have no intention of finding fault with the present specimen of the method, further than by saying that it is nothing more. We will allow ourselves only one criticism of detail; we feel aggrieved, in an English book, at having to read about Petrus and Paulus. Why are the Peter and Paul of our Authorised Version not thought worthy of being recalled by their namesakes? We know not whether M. Ebers intended his monk Paul to symbolise the Pauline doctrine of celibacy, and his senator Peter to remind us, like the Marriage Service, that Peter was "himself a married man;" but anyhow, the foreign form of names which are so familiar, suggests either slovenliness or affectation, while it deprives them of as much meaning as proper names can possess.

Perhaps we shall be thought captious when we declare ourselves

* *Homo Sum.* By Georg Ebers. From the German, by Clara Bell. London: Sampson Low and Co.

as little satisfied with the name given by the author to the work as with the name given by the translator to the hero. The quotation which M. Ebers has placed on his title-page seems to us as inappropriate an introduction to the history of the hermit Paul as we confess—and the confession may invalidate our right to an opinion—to having always thought it as the justification of the good-natured old meddler Chremes. M. Ebers might have professed himself content to be blamed in company with Terence, but his avowal that he considers himself at liberty to expand the meaning, and forget the origin, of his motto, does away with this defence. This licence in quotation is very common, but we emphatically protest against it. A large part of the Bible and of Shakespeare is utterly confused by our quoting thus passages the meaning of which we sometimes invert, and always blunt and deaden, by forgetting the context. “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,” for instance, is, on the lips of Shakespeare’s Ulysses, an expression of sarcastic scorn,—i.e., the one touch is a love of trumpery. Why must we choose just these words to express a trite common-place of morality? We will not say that M. Ebers’s paraphrase of “Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto,”—“I am a part of humanity, and I feel that I am this above everything” (the English translator, we must observe in a parenthesis, changes the meaning here, by translating “mensch” “man”),—we will not say that this paraphrase loses the meaning of Terence quite so much as our sentimentalists lose the meaning of Shakespeare, but it goes in the same direction. We quite disagree with M. Ebers that Cicero quotes Terence in this vague or expansive manner. “In spite of what Chremes says, the care of other people’s affairs is difficult,” seems to us at once a specimen of the mild Ciceronian wisdom, so much deeper than it seems, and an index to the wide chasm between the Latin words and the German, or indeed almost any modern rendering. We would not have our difference with M. Ebers thought to be a mere question of words. What he makes the sentence mean is, “No other antithesis, Christian or infidel, German or Frenchman, aristocrat or plebeian, ought for a moment to throw into the shade the great fact of a common humanity.” No doubt that was a Stoical idea, and it is also a modern idea, but it is entirely unlike anything in the mind of an early Christian. To him, a common humanity would mean only a participation in a fallen nature. The doctrine of human corruption was sharply formulated not a hundred years after the date of this story, and had possession of men’s minds long before. “I am a man” would have meant, at that time, “I am the member of a fallen race.” There was, at the date of this story, no sense of brotherhood among Christians with men who were not Christians.

However, an English reviewer ought to overlook many defects in a good specimen of the school to which this novel belongs. The fiction of our country has of late set itself far too much to satisfy that spirit which enjoys nothing so much as reproduction of the familiar. It is a great loss when this is the aim of a writer of popular literature. The exhibition of large ideals in their influence on individual lives is not only an object which may be profitably carried out in the field of fiction, but we do not see that it can be at once vividly and fully carried out anywhere else. No biography can supply forcible and adequate illustration of any moral law. It hurts our sense of the reverence due to the mystery of an individual being, when we see a biographer make more than the slightest and most cursory approach to the position of one who might thus use it, though, no doubt, these approaches constitute a large part of the interest of a biography. Two sources alone bring home to the mind the reality and power of the laws of the moral world,—the creations of genius, and the incommunicable experience of an individual soul. It is a grave misfortune when half the ground available for this enlargement of our power of sympathy and our appreciation of character, is occupied with what is ephemeral or trivial, and we give a warm welcome to any attempt, such as we have before us, to occupy the most frequented region of literature with large and valuable thought.

Such an attempt is made at most advantage, in some sense, when it takes its subject-matter from the life of the past. All moral and social problems show their broad outlines more clearly in the atmosphere of history than in the near and tangled present. It is true that the representation of these dim, far-off outlines can never meet with as ready appreciation as those which reproduce details familiar to every-day experience. The effort of our greatest contemporary writer of fiction in this line is, we believe, her least popular work, and the laziness of the average reader has probably had a small share in this result. However, we

have always suspected that “Romola” was a picture taken at a wrong focus. Not even transcendent genius can make the reader so intimate with the characters of a past age as to enter into their inner life, and be made cognisant of subtle shades of feeling. In the choice of a right distance for the objects to be delineated, we think that Scott must always remain a model for the historical painter. His heroes, however much we may be told about them, never come into that zone of intimacy in which we discern any feeling or thought of theirs which we cannot imagine them ready to utter. We will pay *Homo Sum* the high compliment of saying that it reminds us in this one particular of the acknowledged master of historical fiction. We do not mean that the novel does not contain a great deal of what appears to us obtrusive detail—this marks, we presume, the German way of telling a story—but the details are all such as concern the outward life. We are hardly ever led into the region in which we cannot fail to discern the feelings and thoughts of the writer’s own time. If we wanted to exhibit what we consider the right and the wrong ideal in this respect, we should set *Homo Sum* side by side, not with the work of genius we have mentioned, which is separated from it by too many differences to show forth any particular one, but with a novel which it will, we think, recall to the mind of more than one reader,—a novel of greater power and of a more absorbing kind of interest, but losing the effect of its real historic wealth through just this want of self-restraint, Kingsley’s *Hyppatia*. A book which brings the reader into contact with the ideas of a mind as interesting as Charles Kingsley’s, must be itself interesting, but we cannot say that we think his elaborate study of a past age brings him into contact with the ideas of any time so much as with those of our own.

But we have set the two books side by side rather for their resemblance than their difference. There are more and greater differences between them than the one we have mentioned, still the idea which the German writer sets forth in his title and works out in the events of his narrative, and which is wrought into the very warp and woof of the English writer’s glowing style, is sufficient to bring them near enough for comparison. That idea, indeed, is one common to their respective nations. Their sense of the claims and blessedness of those ties which centre round the domestic hearth—of all that the early ages in which these fictions are placed undervalued, and which our own appreciates so highly, may we not say so exaggeratedly?—is so important, that we can class together, in virtue of their common occupation of this ground, two works of imagination, one of which was the outcome of a Christianity as fervent as that of the Asceticism it attacked, and the other of which leaves us in doubt whether the author regards Christianity as more than a dream. We hasten to add that any anxiety as to the tone of a book dealing with such problems as we have indicated is here as superfluous as it is natural. The book is conspicuously pure in tone. Perhaps it is not the better picture on that account of what it aims at representing, but the sacrifice of historic truth is, we believe, quite necessary. Mr. Kingsley complained in the preface to *Hyppatia* that the painter of a decaying heathen society was forbidden to do justice to his subject, and certainly he went farther in this direction than M. Ebers has done. We will only say that a picture painted under these restrictions cannot form the ground of a moral judgment. Before we can decide whether the monk did right to quit the world, we must know the world he quitted. But on other grounds we object to any condemnation of his choice, from the point of view of our own day. We feel the fullest sympathy for the few courageous spirits who ventured on the protest, in the ages when it was dangerous to make it. When Julian the Pelagian declares, against the terrible Augustine, that a life of conjugal fidelity was as innocent as a life of celibacy, we welcome the vindication of natural impulse against the restrictions of an inverted impurity. When the vindication is repeated in our own day, we feel that the loss of its necessity is the loss of its value, and of much of its truth. It is as great, and perhaps a not much less hurtful mistake, to preach that the instincts which Asceticism repressed are virtuous, as to preach that they are vicious. The interests that centre in the domestic hearth now need no advocate. On the other hand, the ideal which is impossible except to one who has renounced that life, is almost as underrated in our day as it was overrated in the days of *Hyppatia* and the hermit Paul. There are many forms of goodness that will only grow in the soil of family life, but there are some that grow best elsewhere, and for selfishness or

self-sacrifice to be absolute, we suspect, that man must stand alone.

Perhaps we may be thought to answer ourselves in adding that the character to which the story owes its whole interest (the others being markedly inferior) is an exhibition of exactly the kind of self-sacrifice that family life makes impossible. We think that the power with which this ideal is exhibited is designed only to strengthen its condemnation, but we will try to make the reader our judge.

It is impossible in a short notice to give any idea of the subtlety and force with which the portrait of the hero is given. The double personality—the heathen Menander reviving from time to time in the hermit Paul—seems to us as original a conception in fiction as it is, no doubt, familiar to the depths of spiritual experience. The first half of this double life, amid the turbulent and frivolous luxury of Alexandria, is suggested by a few pages of reminiscence, recalling one of the narrow and brilliant glimpses, crowded with learned detail, which M. Alma-Tadema, to whom the work is dedicated, is so fond of introducing into the background of his figure studies. Beyond the narrow cell of the hermit Paul, on the granite rocks of Mount Sinai, we see the Paris of the old world,—the bustling city where Menander hurries from one frivolous pursuit to another, striving to lose in the whirl of the race-course and the palaestra, the banqueting-hall and the cock-pit, the consciousness of a heavy burden, which he can by no means cast off. The Neo-Platonic wisdom which he hears from the lips of his brother, although often recurring in later days in the solitude of his cell, falls on his ears in the intervals of his arduous and meaningless hurry of life as something foreign to all desire of his, and his scanty and superficial intercourse with Christians suggests no well from which the deep thirst of his soul may be quenched. A wound received in a drunken brawl brings him first an opportunity of realising the meaning of the new faith. As a half-recovered invalid, he listens to a strange pleading before his Christian host, where the suit is between an old man who refuses to receive, and his fellow-proprietors, who refuse to retain, his share of a harvest in which he has not worked. The faith thus introduced to Menander as the teaching of justice and mercy becomes his own, and when the last persecutions of heathenism offer him the opportunity, the luxurious reveller bears with a joyous steadfastness, the worst that cruelty and bigotry can inflict. He has a fair young companion in the torture-chamber, and his memory of the convert whose self-adopted name of Magdalene has been earned by sin and justified by repentance which make the rack welcome, remains in his recollection, as the deep spring of human tenderness and guardian of wavering purity in the hermit's cell. The idea is a fine one, but it seems to us essentially modern and German. Perhaps sentimentality is the almost inevitable drawback of the exemption we have noted in this kind of historical painting, and while it is a fault much less offensive than coarseness to modern taste, it cannot be denied to be a greater disqualification to any painter of past life and manners. The classical world was nothing so little as sentimental. However, there are great significance and beauty in the unconscious transformation of Menander's love for Magdalene into Paul's love for one whom till late in the story he does not recognise as her son, and the relation of the pious monk to the impatient youth who loathes the life of a "praying animal" is full of originality and beauty. There is a severity in words as well as a tenderness in deeds in the dealings of the elder with the younger man which seems to us to paint finely the double relation between them, and to be all the truer to nature because the object of all this tenderness is a common-place creature enough. The life of empty and narrow piety to which Hermas is confined by his obedience to his father wakens indulgent sympathy in the anchorite, who has chosen this life for himself, and he contrives an escape into the longed-for world for one who can only conquer it by knowing it. The parting gift, a sheep-skin covering, which giver needs no less than receiver, is a typical summary of their whole relation. The gift is to cost the giver more than sleepless nights on his rocky couch, for Hermas has left his own sheepskin on the floor of the chamber of the fair Gaul, Sirona, and when the injured husband, as he imagines himself (though in truth the midnight interview has been as innocent as that of two children, and this seems to us the most unreal touch in the book), professes his fierce resolve to find its owner, Paul, with a sudden impulse of self-devoting generosity, steps forward, and declares it to belong to him. We are reminded of the falsehood of Victor Hugo's Bishop, in *Les Misérables*, when he declares himself to have given Valjean the candlesticks he has stolen. How far the disastrous con-

sequences of the heroic mistake are meant as a condemnation of its want of truth, we are not sure. They may, possibly, be intended to exhibit one of the most characteristic differences in the Catholic and Protestant ideal; and it must be confessed that it is not often granted to human love to intercept the penalty due to the sin of another at its own cost, without some sacrifice of truth, as well as an utter sacrifice of self: but we wish this suggestion had been omitted, for it seems to us too much to complicate the moral interest of the narrative. The penalty is a terrible one in the case of the anchorite Paul. It is not hard to the passionate ascetic to bear the scourge of the enraged centurion, or even the scorn and loathing of the Christian community which follow it; but even in the supreme hour of peril, the excommunicated monk may not defend the community he has disgraced, and exclusion from a post of honourable danger, when a strong arm could have sheltered and a dauntless heart could perhaps have inspired with something of its own spirit the cowardly crew brought together by common fear, is a tremendous punishment to a brave man. The picture of the garrison of hermits, huddling together to pray, when the duty of men was to fight, is drawn with vigorous scorn, and gives a profound pathos to the fate of one who is condemned to share their ignoble passivity with a heart on fire. Still the hardest trial remains, in his own shameful fall from his height of purity and abnegation; he who has borne hard blows with fortitude and meekness, wakens to murderous hatred at a few words of scorn; he who has borne the unearned disgrace of the adulterer finds the fierce, sudden flame in his heart, in the presence of the very woman for whose supposed lover he has undergone so much. If this scene were not spoiled by a good deal of sentimentality on the part of the minor characters, we should be tempted to say it was one of the finest we can recall in recent fiction. The fierce, turbulent, dissipated heathen suddenly reviving in the Christian monk, is a picture we have seen equalled only in the creations of genius, and seldom surpassed even there. The transformation is as transitory as it is sudden. The spirit of the martyred Magdalene recalls the sliding virtue of Paul from the precipice, and his lonely death is preceded by an expiation perfect in its simplicity and fullness, and very naturally conceived, we think, in the slightness of recognition with which it is met. That he inscribes on the rocky wall of his cell an entreaty to pray for an unhappy one who was a man is almost the only passage which connects the story with the title, and it appears to us so singularly improbable that we are inclined to think it must be a fact. Nevertheless, we feel it, in the deepest sense of the words, wanting in historic truth, and hurtful to the unity of tone in the picture where it finds a place. There is a groundwork of fact in the tale. M. Ebers tells us that his romance was first suggested to him by the account of a real fact mentioned in the chronicles he was studying,—the self-sacrifice of a monk who did, like Paul, take upon himself shame and punishment to save a guilty companion from enduring them. We will allow ourselves to believe that the unknown monk of Mount Sinai, who "laid down his life for his friend" (for more than life, we imagine, was implied in his expulsion from a Christian community), was granted an insight into the meaning of the faith in a God who died for man, such as was sufficient to sustain him through the ebb of enthusiastic devotion, the bitter experience of human ingratitude, and the bitterer disappointment in the failure of divine recognition and help where it was most counted on, which, whether or not it formed any part of the experience of Gethsemane, has been the portion of every spirit which has striven since that day to drink that cup, and be baptised with that baptism. A narrative which owes its main interest to the illustration which it affords of this possibility can hardly be regarded from any other point of view. We might, indeed, have criticised *Homo Sum* from the point of view of the historian, and every reader will feel, we think, that the rise of the monastic life has been made more explicable, as well as more picturesque, by the description of this early phase, in which a father and son share a narrow cell, and the hermit's life is the possible scene of filial duty and neighbourly kindness. But the reviewer who confined his attention to this aspect of the story would, we think, miss its deeper meaning.

MR. HUGHES ON THE NATIONAL CHURCH.*

THERE is a freshness and a force in this collection of speeches and lectures on the subject of the National Church which will, we hope, do more to excite the interest of Liberal politicians in the subject of the Establishment, and of the Radical cry for its

* *The Old Church: What shall we do with it?* By Thomas Hughes, Q.C. London: Macmillan and Co.