

neccessitous young ladies that instead of cook and housemaid, she needs the services of two "companions," who will agree to perform the necessary domestic work, on condition that they shall not lose caste, shall share in the lady's own occupations and sit with her in the evening, and shall be chaperoned by her to an accessible amusements not interfering with their work, as a kind-hearted and sensible person would naturally wish to be the case with what is technically called a "companion." The roughest work might be deputed to a charwoman, and the ordinary housework and cooking might be much lightened by judicious arrangement, as in the charming American tale of "We Girls." I cannot but believe that such a situation would be eagerly grasped at by hundreds of those girls of gentle birth who are not well educated, and have no aptitude for teaching or for nursing, and yet are obliged to earn their own living in any way they can. The mistress would have to sacrifice her solitary state, but she would gain in recompense the pleasure of the society of young people not necessarily below herself in birth or in refinement. This condition of things was constantly the case in former generations, as Miss Tytler shows us in her pretty story of the "Diamond Rose," and I believe that in Germany at the present day a "Hausjungfer" is frequently the daughter of a clergyman, and holds a post such as I have described. Would not this experiment, if tried in a few quiet and happy homes, quickly raise the appreciation of domestic usefulness to its true place among the women of England?—I am, Sir, &c., S. P. A.

S. P. A.

P O E T R Y.

THREE SONNETS.

TO NATURE IN HER ASCRIBED CHARACTER OF UNMEANING
AND ALL-PERFORMING FORCE.

O NATURE! thou whom I have thought to love,
 Seeing in thine the reflex of God's face,
 A loath'd abstraction would usurp thy place,—
 While Him they not dethrone, they but disprove.

Weird Nature! can it be that joy is fled,
And bald un-meaning lurks beneath thy smile?
That beauty haunts the dust but to beguile,
And that with Order, Love and Hope are dead?

Pitiless Force, all-moving, all-unmov'd,
Dread mother of unfather'd worlds, assuage
Thy wrath on us,—be this wild life reprov'd,
And trampled into nothing in thy rage!

Vain prayer, although the last of humankind,—
Force is not wrath,—she is but deaf and blind.

June 19.

II.

Dread Force, in whom of old we lov'd to see
A nursing mother, clothing with her life
The seeds of Love divine, with what sore strife
We hold or yield our thoughts of Love and thee!

Thou art not 'calm,' but restless as the ocean,
Filling with aimless toil the endless years,—
Stumbling on thought, and throwing off the spheres,
Churning the Universe with mindless motion.

Dull fount of joy, unhallow'd source of tears,
Cold motor of our fervid faith and song,
Dead, but engendering life, love, pangs, and fears,
Thou crown'dst thy wild work with foulest wrong,—

When first thou lightedst on a seeming goal,
And darkly blunder'd on man's suffering soul.

June 20.

III.

Blind Cyclop, hurling stones of destiny,
And not in fury!—working bootless ill,
In mere vacuity of mind and will—
Man's soul revolts against thy work and thee!

Slaves of a despot, conscienceless and nil,
Slaves, by mad chance befooled to think them free,
We still might rise, and with one heart agree
To mar the ruthless "grinding of thy mill!"

Dead tyrant, tho' our cries and groans pass by thee,
Man, cutting off from each new "tree of life"
Himself, its fatal flower, could still defy thee,
In waging on thy work eternal strife.—

The races come and coming evermore,
Heaping with hecatombs thy dead-sea shore.

June 23.

EMILY PFEIFFER.

BOOKS.

SUPERNATURAL RELIGION.*

[FIRST NOTICE.]

WE give a hearty welcome to this learned and able work. When we add that the conclusion which it aims at establishing is one which we should consider more fatal to all the best aims and hopes of humanity than the universal prevalence of superstition, this welcome may seem intended as a sarcasm. This intention we would earnestly disclaim. The ability and acquirement which these volumes manifest are, we believe, never more valuable than when they are employed to distinguish the convictions which are of right the inheritance of all, from those opinions which can be legitimately held by only a few. To disentangle our ultimate beliefs from the prejudices which are let in with every fresh link in a chain of popular inference is often the first step towards truth. And this we hold to be the achievement of the present volumes.

It is, however, so far from being the intention of the writer, that the whole book seems to depend on the confusion of things known at first-hand with things known at second-hand. The question he sets himself to answer is—What is the Supernatural? Has the word any definite meaning? Is anything above Nature? Are the dreams which have haunted humanity that the something above Nature has more to do with us than Nature itself, anything more than objectless yearnings? And the emphatic negative which he returns to these varied forms of the ultimate question of our day is established by an elaborate proof that the Christian Scriptures are the slow and natural growth of the age which succeeded the birth of Christ. So clear an intellect would not have been blind to such a chasm in his logic, if it were not bridged by the only assumption of Christians which he is willing to accept,—viz., that these Scriptures contain our whole evidence for the supernatural action of God on man. It is natural enough to consider that the only opinion which two opposed parties hold in common is likely to be true. At issue with every view of Christianity as to its first principles, he is at one with the average believer in Christianity as to a single point in the popular creed, he believes that the supernatural character of the events narrated in the Christian Scriptures, and the supernatural character of those Scriptures themselves, must stand or fall together. He thinks that if he shows the evidence for those events to consist in writings which, only appearing in their present shape about a century and a half after the events to which they refer, prove themselves to have grown up by a perfectly natural process among a cluster of traditional narratives, he disproves events which, in their utter improbability, could be established by nothing but a consensus of enlightened contemporary testimony. This is the belief which we desire to commend to the reader's reconsideration, and we are glad to have so good an excuse for doing so as is afforded us by the masterly examination of the evidences for the antiquity of the Christian Scriptures contained in these volumes. So far as we know, it is an unparalleled specimen in the English language. It might have been a little condensed, but when we have said this much, we have only un-mixed praise for the literary workmanship of this part of the volume. We propose to-day to give a slight account of it; on a future occasion we hope to notice the preliminary dissertation on the miraculous, which seems to us so much feeble, that, from a literary point of view, we cannot help regretting that it forms a portion of the same work, although we feel that the comparative strength of these two parts is a striking illustration of our statement to the confusion in the writer's mind on the relation of Christianity to its records.

If, like this opponent of our religion, and most of its supporters, we concede that the evidence of Christianity consists in a number of writings known collectively as the New Testament, it becomes of the utmost importance to ascertain what is the New Testament. These four biographies, purporting to be written by the disciples of Christ (at first or second-hand), are the guarantee for the facts of his life, but what is the guarantee for them? How are we sure that the writers had any means of knowing what they assert? How do we know that they were not religious romances written long after the events to which they refer, such as the singular work called the *Clementina*, which (to quote the description of an orthodox historian of our Church) "bears on its front and through-

* *Supernatural Religion*. London: Longmans.

out the character of a romance," written "by a representative of what can scarcely be supposed an insignificant party in Rome, who does not scruple to couple fiction with the most sacred names"? (*Milman's History of Latin Christianity*.) If the author of the *Clementina* felt entitled to take such liberties, why not the writers of the four Gospels? The answer to this question is given by apologists in the shape of quotations from our Gospels to be found in early Christian writers, showing the credence with which they were received by the whole Church, at a time when tradition was fresh and lively enough to act as a check upon error. Now what do we know about these writers? The account given in the volumes we are noticing is a perfect mine of information on this subject, alloyed indeed with no small prejudice, yet so wonderfully faithful and comprehensive, that any error may be detected by the light of the writer's own searching and scholarly criticism, and what follows is mainly a slight sketch and occasional illustration of his dissertation, with his references now and then enlarged, and his arguments supplemented from other sources.

The Christian writings of the post-Apostolic age present themselves to the critical attention of our time in a thin stream of authentic utterance, accessible only through thorn-brakes of controversy and quicksands of doubt. Let us take a few descriptions of them, not from the present work, with its evidently sceptical bias, but from a biographical dictionary stamped with the impress of cautious orthodoxy at every page where such a stamp was possible: "To Clement of Rome are ascribed two epistles addressed to the Corinthian Church, both probably genuine, the first certainly so. This," the only unquestionably genuine epistle, "seems to contain an important interpolation, the style of which savours of a later age." "Respecting the epistle attributed to Barnabas, great diversity of opinion has prevailed from the date of its publication to the present day." One of the main reasons why the "Shepherd of Hermas" was generally held in such high esteem was undoubtedly the belief that its author, Hermas, was the same as the one mentioned by St. Paul. . . . and we must suppose that its author was either this person, or one who assumed his name, for the purpose of acquiring a greater influence on the mind of his readers." These passages are taken from the account given in Smith's *Classical Dictionary* of the first documents subjected to our author's searching analysis, and are enough, we think, to show what is the most that can be said for the authenticity of these fragments, as the volumes before us show what is the most that can be said against it. Till we come to Justin Martyr, we do not meet with a single writer whose remaining works can be undoubtingly ascribed to him. There are other reasons for this than the lapse of time. The writers of these early ages had a wholly different feeling about authorship from what we have now. Their whole view of truth—that it was something to be thought out within the mind—induced an indifference about testimony which made the question of authorship comparatively unimportant. There is a curious illustration of this at a much later date than any work germane to the present question, in a controversy between Jerome and Augustine at the beginning of the fourth century. Augustine writes to Jerome to find fault with a passage "in your reputed writings" (*scripta quæ tua dicerentur*), and keeps this loophole for escape carefully open, though apparently the only reason for doubt was the writer's wish to disbelieve,—a reason felt equally valid by his correspondent, for he writes back that he will not answer the letter till he is certified that it really was written by Augustine. Perhaps neither Father had any very serious doubt as to the authorship of the obnoxious passages, but the fact that both could veil their displeasure beneath this guise of incredulity, speaks forcibly for the insecurity of any judgment of ours upon the subject of doubtful authorship in these early ages.

Suppose, however, that this difficulty is overcome; suppose that the Epistles of Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarp were all as well authenticated as the unquestioned Epistles of St. Paul, what would be the inference from their quotations of Scripture? If our witnesses are all of unimpeachable character, what is the value of their evidence? We could wish that our author had brought out this last question in all its predominance by a somewhat slighter treatment of the first; it is a little confusing to our perception of the real issue to find so long a preliminary investigation of the authenticity of writings the genuineness of which he might, so far as his argument goes, have very well assumed. For let us confine our attention to the quotations from the undoubted writings of Justin Martyr, who may be taken as the best witness for the orthodox view, and see what they prove. His first Apology, addressed to Marcus Aurelius, representing his attitude towards the Gentile

world, and his Dialogue with Trypho, representing his attitude towards the Jewish—our earliest considerable specimens of Christian apologetics—are rich in quotations from the Old Testament, and references to the facts and doctrines contained in the New. These Old-Testament quotations form an important element in the problem we have to decide as to the nature of these asserted references to the New, and our author might have strengthened his case by bringing forward a few of them, in order to show the reader how entirely Justin was a supporter of what we should call plenary or literal inspiration. "God has proclaimed to you through the prophet Isaiah in these words, &c." (*Dial. cum Tryph.* 16.) "The Holy Spirit cries to you through Isaiah, as it were speaking in the character of a child of Abraham." (*Ib.* 25). "You must believe Zachariah showing you the mystery of Christ in a parable. His words are these," &c. (*Ib.* 115.) "We know that all who can declare the truth and do not declare it will be judged by God, as God has declared through Ezechiel in these words," &c. (*Ib.* 82.) "The Holy Spirit speaks through Jeremiah." (78.) The reader will see from these specimens, taken at random, that Justin's idea of inspiration is as definite and extended as that of a rigid Evangelical in our own day. God speaks *through* the prophet, the man is a mere pipe for the divine voice, and this not only in those passages which would in the ordinary sense of the word be called prophecies, but in passages which have nothing to distinguish them from mere human utterances except the fact that they were spoken by a particular person. The first of our quotations, for instance, introduces the first few verses of the 57th chapter of Isaiah, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart," &c.—words in which there is nothing that we cannot imagine the Evangelical prophet to have spoken of his own accord, and without reference to any special divine impulse. Generally the name of the writer is given, and this is a very important point for our present purpose; but sometimes the reference is made simply to "the Scripture," "the prophetic spirit," "the Holy Spirit," and sometimes the quotation is introduced simply by "it says," "the inspiring spirit" being understood. By every form of reference and quotation we are continually reminded that Justin is citing a series of utterances in which the human personality goes for nothing; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, and Moses are for him so much blank paper, on which certain divine messages have been written, and are named apparently only for convenience of reference. It is a theory which would not perhaps be accepted in its simple consistency by more than a small party in our day, but we do not see that it differs from the ordinary orthodox view in anything but consistency.

But does this hold good when we come to the quotations from the writings which any one now holding Justin's views on inspiration would look upon as typical specimens of inspired Scripture? By no means. The tone of reference is entirely different. He never tells us that the Holy Spirit, speaking through Matthew or Mark, says so and so; nor does he ever speak of his authorities as "Scriptures," or use any of the forms with which his Old-Testament references have made us familiar. His information is derived, he tells us, from the "Recollections, or Reminiscences," of the Apostles,—for so, we agree with our author, the *Ἀπομνημόνευμα τῶν Ἀποστόλων* might be more suitably rendered than by its ordinary translation, "The Memoirs of the Apostles." Except in one doubtful instance, he never mentions an author's name, and from the invariable use of the article, it would appear that these "Reminiscences" were a single collective work, which the substance of his quotations proves to have stood in such a relation to our Gospels that some critics are able to assert their identity,—with what justice we hope, even in our narrow space, to give the reader some means of forming a judgment. We must, however, delay for a moment upon the title. The theory of inspiration current among us is too vague and elastic to resist anything but its direct contrary, but that which is implied in every word Justin cites from the Old Testament refuses to make room for anything that can be called "recollection." His sense of the contrast of the two things is expressed in a remarkable passage, which follows an account of the miraculous birth of Christ. "Thus we are taught by those who have recorded everything about our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we trust them because the prophetic spirit has declared, through Isaiah, that he should be thus born." (*Ap.* i. 33.) This is a classical passage for our purpose. First, there is an exhaustive record of the history of Jesus Christ, executed by his Apostles from their recollections. Secondly, this record is worthy of credence, not because the recorders are themselves partakers of the prophetic spirit, not because the afflatus which so many ages before the birth

of Christ descended on the seers of the old dispensation, to reveal through them to the world the great events in which that dispensation should conclude, now enlightened contemporary spectators as to the details of those events, but merely because the narrative is authenticated by prophecy. This is such an inversion of our ordinary way of looking at things, that it needs a little consideration to take it in. If we have to compare a narrative and a prophecy, we start from the narrative. Our first question is what is the evidence for such and such events posterior to their taking place? It seems a topsy-turvy way of looking at history, to begin from the other end, to ask first, what was to happen, and give or withhold credence to the narrative in proportion as it mirrors this anticipation faithfully or not. But there is no question that this is Justin's view. No unprejudiced person, we venture to assert, will deny that it puts the Old and New Testament on a totally different foundation. They cease to be equivalent representations of the same transactions seen by the old writers in the future, by the new in the past, and by both under some supernatural light. They are contrasted exactly as a photograph and a drawing are contrasted. The prophecy has the guaranteed accuracy of an infallible presentation, the narrative is authenticated by its faithful correspondence with this unquestionable test, but it is the work of fallible intelligence, and might have erred, though it has not. Supposing, then, that Justin was quoting from our four Gospels, he was quoting from a book of which he did not hold the opinion held by modern orthodox writers concerning our New Testament. But had he even the same words before him? Were these *Reminiscences of the Apostles* the same as our four Gospels? "Certainly they were," was the reply of the old-fashioned commentator, who explained any inconvenient variations 'by conveniently elastic theories of free quotation from memory, imperfect and varying MSS., combination and condensation of passages, and so on.' To these uncritical students our author offers the most complete antithesis, and we think he has fully proved that the work from which Justin quoted can be identified with our Gospels only on a most peculiar view of textual development. Hardly any of Justin's quotations exactly fit the corresponding place in our Gospels; he narrates some facts which they do not contain, such as the incident of Christ's birth in a cave, and a fire being kindled in Jordan at the baptism, and betrays an ignorance of some facts which some of them do contain, such as the attack on Malchus by Peter, although he has expressly said that these *Reminiscences* contain all things concerning the life of Christ. (*Apol. i.*, 33.) We think these facts are enough, since books do not grow like trees, to show that the work mentioned by Justin cannot have been one of our Gospels, but we will specify one divergence which all will allow to be a crucial test. The narrative of the baptism of Christ cited by Justin contains two important variations from our text,—the fire in Jordan, which we have mentioned before, and one other. "When Jesus came out of the water. . . . a voice came from the heavens, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'" (*Dial.* 88.) The fire in Jordan occurs in the apocryphal gospel of the Hebrews, and is a manifest adaptation to the preaching of John the Baptist, but it is the variation of the address to Christ on which we would now fix attention. The context is important. Trypho, the Jew whom Justin is trying to convert, has just allowed that a prophecy of Isaiah which has been quoted refers to Christ, and goes on, "But you assert his pre-existence as God. . . . how can he have pre-existed who is completed (*πληροῦται*) by the powers of the Holy Spirit, as if he had any need of them?" Justin allows in answer that there is some difficulty in the passage quoted, which is Isaiah xl., 1-3, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a blossom shall come up out of the root of Jesse. And the spirit of God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of wisdom and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him." He evidently feels the natural inference from this passage to be that the person thus described was some favoured mortal, whose endowment of supernatural grace was an event in his career, and not a peculiarity of his nature, and goes on to explain away this inference in an answer containing nothing to our purpose except this account of the baptism. Now, nothing could be more appropriate to Justin's argument than the divine words addressed to Christ as they stand in our version. That at the moment when this symbolic purification was undergone, a voice should declare from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," seems an answer to the very difficulty felt by Trypho; this celestial assurance, coming at the moment of an act which might seem a confession of imperfection, would appear a special provision

against any such inference from this act. But can the same be said of the passage which Justin does quote? Surely the very opposite. "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," as applied to Christ, confutes Justin, not Trypho; he might more than ever urge, "How can Christ have pre-existed, if at the moment when this divine influence descended upon him, a divine voice declared him to be then first truly divine?" So that those who assert Justin to have had our Gospels before him are in this extraordinary position,—they must allow that having before them a passage which was most telling for his own argument, he changed it for another which was most telling for his adversary.

We may add, although our author does not, that the omissions of Justin in this part of his argument are almost as striking as his alterations. Nothing, for instance, would be more natural in reply to Trypho's objection than to reply, "This was the very objection made by John, when Christ came to him for baptism, 'I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?'" Can we believe that Justin had such a sentence before him in his *Reminiscences of the Apostles*, and wrote such an account of the appearance of Christ on the banks of the Jordan as the following, totally omitting this circumstance?—"And when Christ had come to the Jordan, and was thought the son of Joseph the carpenter, and appeared void of grace, as the Scriptures had predicted, and was considered a carpenter himself (for, indeed, he used to make yokes and ploughs, teaching by these symbols energy and righteousness,) then the Holy Spirit, as I have already said, descended upon him in the form of a dove," &c. We should say that this account left out the very point of the whole narrative, from Justin's point of view, but an alteration is so much more striking than an omission, that if anyone thinks the first can be explained, the second will give him no difficulty whatever.

We do not mean to imply that the foregoing are average tests of the correspondence between Justin's citations and our Gospel. This is, perhaps, too much the impression left by the author we are reviewing, though it must be added that his own careful accuracy of reference enables the reader to correct whatever in it is erroneous. We have quoted all the instances which would separately convince us that Justin had not our Gospels before him, though that conviction is intensified, no doubt, by the numerous slight divergencies pointed out by our author. And we must repeat that in a question which, like the present, depends on the amount of evidence, the reader must be prepared to go into the faintest shades of difference, and attend to every instance of incongruity, before he can form an opinion. If he does so without prejudice, we do not hesitate to say he will come to the conclusion of our author, that Justin was quoting from a work about as different from any one of our Synoptics as they are from each other. This negative proof must not be taken for more than it is worth. Our author has not shown that a copy of our Gospels, such as we know them, may not have existed at the time of Justin, but only that he had no such copy before him. Justin's writings do not disprove the existence of such a copy,—indeed the ambiguous character of his supposed quotations from, or coincidences with, St. Paul's letters does seem to show that even the most unquestionably authentic of those epistles were not familiar to him; and of course, he might just as well have been unacquainted with an authentic Gospel already in existence, and known elsewhere, as with an authentic epistle;—but Justin's writings cannot, with such discrepancies, be brought forward to prove that any such copy did exist.

'Well, but what does it matter?' the reader may exclaim, with some impatience. Why is the question of 'Supernatural Religion' to turn on a discussion interesting only to antiquarians? There is no doubt that a couple of generations later than Justin you get to authenticated Scripture, what difference is it to make in one's view of the evidences of Christianity whether the records of its origin were accepted by the Church 1770 or 1650 years ago? We shall devote what space remains to us to the answering this question.

It is the tendency of our day, for good and for evil, to shrink from all definiteness of statement in matters of ultimate belief. People take refuge from definite issues in broad principles, and often think they are comprehensive when they are only illogical. Because logic is never applicable to premisses, it has come to be thought not quite invariably applicable to inference. Because, on the furthest subject which the human mind can reach, there is no room for anything but assertion, there is a feeling in many minds that in reasoning downwards from these ultimate data you may make assertion do duty for argument. Especially is this tendency manifest in our attitude towards the inspiration of Scripture. The cultivated mind of our day has practically abandoned what

our forefathers meant by those words. No thoughtful clergyman now believes that the writers of either Testament were shielded from unimportant error, hardly anyone, we suppose, would deny that our Gospels contain instances of such error. But when we come to the logical consequences of these admissions, we find that there is an intermediate region of mist, in which premiss and conclusion may be hopelessly severed, and as a compensation, contradictory propositions united in the firmest amity. We have said that the tendency we speak of has its good as well as its evil side, but as applied to the character of the Bible, it seems to us merely evil. As to the authorship, the accuracy, and the date of a particular writing, there is room for ignorance, but for mystery, none whatever. You may come to the conclusion that you have no data for ascertaining one of these facts, but to confuse this with the conclusion that in dealing with the things of God, the mind is in contact with realities too large for its grasp, and must expect to find much that will not fit in to any logical system, is a piece of intellectual insincerity of the most dangerous kind. Yet this rhetorical device is not uncommon amongst holy men. They know that their hold on the divine life, on an unseen Ruler, and the world of which he is the centre, is one they cannot undertake to justify to those who do not share it; and they feel that this is due, not to any feebleness or vagueness in the ground of their belief, but to its very nature,—that no reason can be given for that which lies at the basis of all reasoning. And when they come to a book which meets and illustrates all these ultimate convictions, it seems to them that the one must stand on the same foundation as the other. Because the words of Christ bring the spirit into contact with ultimate truth, therefore the book which contains the narrative of his life must not be examined with the impartiality with which we should turn to any other historical question. It is not the break-down of logic on which we would now fix attention—not even the want of faith in the independent reality of the things recorded implied by such a break-down—it is the effect upon those who, like the thinker we are criticising, stand outside Christianity. They see that the supernatural character of the record of certain events is contended for with just as much earnestness as the supernatural character of the events themselves (for of course it would be just as much a miracle that a set of writers should be shielded from important error as that they should be shielded from any error at all). Now of the character of the record they can judge. To decide whether a book was written in the first or second century needs learning, patient attention, and a good judgment of evidence,—qualities which stand in no relation to spiritual insight. The opinion of the most devout of men who have none of these qualities is quite worthless on this question, and the most irreverent of mankind may throw valuable light on it, if he has the intellectual qualification for doing so. But from the major premiss, that the supernatural character of the record and of the things recorded stand or fall together, and the minor premiss, that the supernatural character of the record is a matter it needs only attention and learning to decide against, who can doubt the conclusion? It is most natural that men should come to think, as this author has done, that an examination of the age of the Christian Scriptures is an examination of Supernatural Religion, and that in deciding that these Scriptures have no supernatural pretensions or character, that they are no more than that portion ultimately selected by a set of men, not possessing any special qualifications for their task, beyond those with which God endows all whom He calls to important work, out of the whole traditional literature which grew up round the life of Christ—he decides that the faith which they embody and support is a dream.

Now, we, who hold that it is our most precious possession, welcome every effort which shall result in disentangling it from what is perishable, what must soon perish. We hope that these volumes, and those which the author promises as a sequel, will suggest to many minds the vast disproportion between the things they believe and the means by which they are supposed to attain that belief; to a few, perhaps, the surer foundations of those truths which they know, as they know that the sun warms them, and that water quenches their thirst.

MR. NOEL'S "LIVINGSTONE IN AFRICA."*

MR. NOEL has given us here much verse that is beautiful, as well as a fair proportion that is not so, but he has not, to our minds, managed to mould his poem into a whole. There is too much of the tropical African jungle about it, too little of the rugged unity

of character belonging to the great traveller whom the poem is written to commemorate. That Mr. Noel's imagination has been fired by the mystery of the unexplored African continent, by the paradoxical mixture of science and superstition disclosed to us in the story of Egyptian antiquity, by the immensity of the obstructions opposed to the African explorer, the density of African barbarism and ignorance, and the blood-thirsty cruelty of its savage cunning, the massiveness of its physical wildernesses, the mighty labyrinth of its lakes and rivers, the uncanny profusion of its deadly animal ferocities and its still more deadly vegetable miasmas,—that all these things have profoundly impressed Mr. Noel's imagination, and have left a vivid image of themselves on his poem, is obvious enough. But then they have tended rather to obscure than to bring out the outline of Livingstone's character, for there is exceedingly little evidence that that character was influenced at all as Mr. Noel's intellect has been by the mystic lore of Egyptian tradition or the vast wealth and moral chaos of the world he was exploring. We should say that if any one wants to imbue himself, as far as the medium of language will enable him to do so, with the moral and physical Nature of this great unknown world, he can hardly do better than study Mr. Noel's poem; but that so far as anything beyond the physical and moral essences of this great tropical wilderness is concerned, unless it be now and then an exquisitely tender line dedicated to the sorrows of the poor victims of the African slave-traders, he will be disappointed. Nay, he will even be tempted to smile at the canto describing the relief of Livingstone by Stanley, which is quite beneath the level of Mr. Noel's verse, and may be called in passages almost comically bald.

It would have required, to our mind, something of subtlety of imaginative effort to delineate the physical hunger of adventure proper to the born traveller,—the craving for new excitements, the weariness of the old ruts of tame experience,—in conjunction with the special enthusiasm of the Missionary; and we do not think Mr. Noel has succeeded in delineating,—indeed, we think he has hardly attempted to paint,—that strange and yet not uncommon moral fusion between native audacity and the meekness of spiritual obedience. We have here Livingstone rehearsing, in an unnaturally long soliloquy, all the depths of African ignorance, superstition, and cunning, but without that individual mark on what he recalls which would make it seem the reminiscence of an eager spiritual warrior who wishes to smite with the sword of divine truth. In fact, from beginning to end it is an imaginative man rambling at ease, and somewhat diffusely, through the dark jungle of African life, not an individual hero whose language we hear. However, it cannot be denied that some of the pictures of the jungle, the mountain, and the flood, are given with a lavish wealth of fancy that has its charms, though the luxuriant detail is hardly framed in any kind of distinct imaginative form, is hardly given any clear moral perspective by the help of which we are enabled to remember what came first and what last, and why the series of pictures developed themselves as they did. The writer more than once expresses his own recoil before a moral chaos in which the elements of order, though sure of ultimate victory, are so rare, in words which would, we suspect, have been perfectly unintelligible to Livingstone, though uttered in his name. Indeed their language is not of the clearest even to us. We suspect that a traveller who could have spoken as follows of the great mystery around him, would hardly have been of Livingstone's type; for the missionary, though he may think the gospel light which he has to diffuse feeble than he could wish, would hardly think of it as all but extinguished in the surrounding gloom:—

"Is it all fable? is it all illusion?

Nay, doth not our most awful Universe
Lead poor, mad mortals to the wilds alone,
Into a barren wilderness of souls;
Mask'd in stern iron, prison'd in adamant,
A fiery gulf between them and the world;
Forbidden dear embracings of their kind,
And mutually yielding thoughts of all?
Though girt with kindly, once familiar faces,
Lonelier they than are the lonely dead;
Or haunted only by fell fiends that scowl
Out of the very eyes of sleepless love!
God whirls them forth, and sets them in a cleft
Of some ice-armour'd, cloud-robed precipice:
It snows, it howls; the everlasting mountains
Reel, crashing downward in the lightning's eye:
God murmurs in their ears a Mystery
In tongues unknown, of import terrible,
That none may hear or comprehend but they;
Nor even they, but in maim'd cadences;
Wind-wilder'd murmurs of a music wild.
Ah! we all wander blindly in a dream!
Save for a revelation from the Lord."

* *Livingstone in Africa*. By the Hon. Roden Noel. London: Sampson Low and Co. 1874.