

"Say what congenial to his heart of stone
In thy soft bosom could the tyrant trace?
When does the dove the eagle's friendship own?
Or the wolf hold the lamb in pure embrace?"

Then comes a solemn adjuration of the odd combination of lamb and dove—one thinks of Mr. Mantalini, and his “dem’d savage lamb,” on the occasion)—to “plunge the curst mischief”—meaning the snuff-box—“in wide ocean’s flood;” or, as Holland House is not a marine residence, and “our own majestic stream”—meaning the Thames—is handy, to pitch it into “the only stream *he* could not dye with blood.” Lady Holland amply repaid the noble rhymster’s officiousness by preserving the poem. The era was one of verse-writing, and there are several specimens not to be despised in this book. Lord Holland compliments his wife upon her introduction of dahlias into England in remarkably neat couplets, just as his famous uncle complimented Mrs. Fox upon her admirable qualities, in lines at once epigrammatic and well-deserved.

With the third Lord Holland, who died in 1840, in the house which "five hundred travelled people asserted to be the most agreeable in Europe"—where such good things were said, seen, eaten, and drunk as were not to be found elsewhere—its second epoch of intellectual brilliancy and social fame came to an end. The fourth Lord Holland lived more abroad than in England, — at Florence, "encouraging art and welcoming artists;" at Paris, "presiding over an intellectual circle;" in Holland House, "preserving and improving the glorious old fabric, for which he had the greatest affection."

Macaulay has described the society of Holland House at the zenith of its fame; or, as the Princess prettily says, "he has painted a brilliant picture, and only excluded the artist," and now she has set the picture in a tasteful frame. As she leads us over the old house, room by room, fresh objects of interest attract at every step,—from the walking-stick, the pistols, and the Sword of Prudence, which are relics of Charles James Fox, and kept in what is still called the Smoking-room, but is really a receptacle for MSS., to the treasures of the library in detail, with its precious autographs, busts, and portraits, where the ghosts muster strong, if one summons them in the words of Macaulay's incantation. Many mementoes, some royal, others of the homelier kind which tell of human love and its sacred ties and sorrows, lend a peculiar interest to the Yellow Drawing-room. The most frequently recurring associations are perhaps those with Rogers and Moore. We find them constantly inside and outside the house, and dips into their letters are among the treats which the Princess lays out in the dining-room; while, when we are taken into the Dutch garden, it is from Rogers's seat that we read Luttrell's verses, and wonder how he found inspiration in the fact that "the season was June," considering that it was he who described the English climate as "on a fine day, like looking up a chimney; on a rainy day, like looking down it." The beautiful green lane is the scene of the second ghost story. It was, according to *Aubrey's Miscellanies*, under its grand arcades that "the beautiful Lady Diana Rich, daughter to the Earl of Holland, as she was walking in her father's garden at Kensington, to take the fresh air before dinner, about eleven o'clock, being then very well, met with her own apparition, habit, and everything, as in a looking-glass. About a month after, she died of the small-pox. And 'tis said her sister, the Lady Isabelle (Thinne), saw the like of herself also before she died." In the alley, Louis Philippe, the exiled king, who had frequented Holland House during the "Emigration," passed many quiet hours; and the Duke and Duchess d'Aumale were fond of fishing with the late Lord Holland in the Moats, where, in 1804, Captain Best shot Lord Camelford. The Princess has selected wisely among the innumerable associations; they will continue, in certain senses, to accumulate, for Holland House will no doubt, when it shall have passed into the possession of the elder branch of the Fox family—the Earl of Ilchester's—maintain its social eminence.

THE FAIR HAVEN.*

[We allow the following notice to stand as it was written on the first and anonymous edition of the book. A second edition has just appeared, on the title-page of which the author has prefixed his true name (Samuel Butler), has described himself as the author of *Erewhon* (*Notreux*), a satirical work, reviewed in these columns on April 20th, 1872, and to which he has added a preface, in which the merely dramatic character of the framework for his argument is avowed, and our suspicion as to its drift confirmed.]

THIS is a work of considerable ability. We pay it a high literary compliment in saying that its style has more than once recalled

to us that of John Henry Newman, of whom indeed the author seems to us an intellectual kinsman, sharing his logical power, as well as that grace of expression which is perhaps more closely connected with logical power than we are apt to suspect. In spite of this, it is very unsatisfactory reading. It purports to be a posthumous essay in defence of Christianity, and a memoir of the writer; but we cannot help doubting whether this elaborate framework is not a mere dramatic setting to views exactly the opposite of those apparently advocated, a doubt very unfavourable to any literary enjoyment. If it is justified, we must say that the protest it raises in our mind goes deeper than any literary ground. The limit which separates fiction from falsehood—a delicate and subtle one, we admit—is certainly crossed by the writer of this book, unless it is what it pretends to be. However, we shall here confine our attention to its avowed defence of the central miracle of Christianity against the difficulties of a sceptical age. It is such a defence as made Lord Thurlow say to the future Lord Eldon, "I was with you, Mr. Scott, till I heard your argument." That, we admit, is the result of a good many treatises on the Evidences of Christianity; but the disappointment inspired by the alliance of strong faith with weak logic is very different from the feeling which the present volume stirs in the reader,—a perplexed wonder whether, in setting forth a coherent theory, tracing the origin of Christianity to half-conscious imposture, and opposing to it a vague tangle of declamation, the author has not intended to exhibit the weakness of a case which was demolished at the first touch of logic, and reconstructed only by sentiment.

The theory which thus, whatever was the intention of the writer, emerges as the most definite suggestion of the book, is one that we have been often surprised not to find more prominent in rationalistic explanations of Christianity,—that Christ did not die upon the cross at all. Under the reverent care of Joseph of Arimatææ, it is supposed by an imaginary opponent, who, we suspect, holds the covert belief of the writer, that the death-likeswoon of the cross issued in a revival which the sufferer himself, confused by the experience of those awful hours, mistook for a return from the region beyond the grave. The appearance of one supposed to be dead was a spark to the ready pile of enthusiastic credulity, the flame thus kindled threw its reflex glow backward on his whole career, and the crowning miracle of his reappearance produced in the course of time a whole crop of previous miracles. Thus, when a few weeks later, the assassination of the Pharisees completed the work of the cross, an actual death was powerless to destroy the halo which a fictitious death had cast round the brow of an apparent Immortal, and the god was secure on his throne. The view is worked out with so much force and elaboration that it has the effect of originality, though it is not original, and this slight summary needs, as supplement, the following abridged pleading of the opponent of Christianity, to which the book is supposed to be an answer :—

"If we were to hear now of the re-appearance of a man who had been believed to be dead, our first impulse would be to learn the where and when of the death, and the where and when of the first re-appearance. . . . Nor would it be enough that the answers given could be just strained into so much agreement as to allow of a *modus vivendi* among them, and not to exclude the possibility of death; *they must exclude all possibility of life having remained, or we should not hesitate for a moment about refusing to believe that the re-appearance had been miraculous. . . . If a man of note were condemned to death, crucified, and afterwards seen alive, the almost instantaneous conclusion in the days of the Apostles, and in such minds as theirs, would be that he had risen from the dead; but the almost instantaneous conclusion now among all those whose judgment would carry the smallest weight would be that he had never died, that there must have been some mistake.*" (p. 133.)

"We find from the Fourth Gospel that it was about twelve o'clock when Pilate brought out Christ for the last time; the dialogue that followed, the preparations for the crucifixion, the leading Christ outside the city to the place where the crucifixion was to take place, could hardly have occupied less than an hour. By six o'clock the body was entombed, so that the actual time during which Christ hung upon the cross was little more than four hours,—but say five hours, say six, the Crucifixion was avowedly too hurried for death in an ordinary case to have ensued. The thieves had to be killed, as yet alive. Immediately before being taken down from the cross, the body was delivered to friends. Within thirty-six hours afterwards, the tomb in which it had lain had been discovered to have been opened,—a few hours later Jesus was seen alive." (p. 171-72.)

"If unquestionable medical evidence of the death had reached us, we should have to believe that something had happened which was at variance with all our experience of the course of nature, but what irreparable mischief is done to any vital function by the mere act of crucifixion? A man who was crucified died from sheer exhaustion, so that it cannot be deemed improbable that he might swoon away, and that every outward appearance of death might precede death by some hours." (p. 174.)

"It is much less likely that a dead man should come to life again, than that a mistake should be made about his having been dead." (p. 175.)

In confirmation of this position, the writer points out that we never hear again of Joseph of Arimathæa, the one

* *The Fair Haven*. By the late John Pickard Owen. Edited by W. Bickersteth Owen. London: Trübner.

person who would have known certainly that Jesus was or was not dead; that no one saw him emerge from the sepulchre, and that the accounts of his first appearance are of that incoherent, inconsistent, dreamy nature, which suits best with the hypothesis that they are the description given by excited and hysterical women of events which they were in no condition to estimate. Finally he points out the undeniable fact that Christ nowhere declares himself to have risen from the dead. What are we to think of a stupendous improbability advanced on such evidence as this?

Before attempting to answer this question, or even to ask whether it is rightly framed, let us say that we are glad that in any form it has been put. The assertion needs a few words of explanation. Readers of this journal will not need to be told that agreement is not expressed here with the views cited, nor do we look on the uprooting of opinions round which reverence and awe have wound their clustering branches as otherwise than a great evil. It is a price worth paying only in order to uproot an error, or to substitute conviction for opinion, but to us it appears a gain to exchange the languid assent that we have come to call Faith for a question, however it is answered. It is not Doubt which is the enemy of Faith, but that indolent languor of mind which rests on the unquestioned certainties of the outward world, and leaves all beyond in the deepening shadow of indifference. This subtle and insidious enemy borrows the language and assumes the guise of the spirit it opposes, and many who deem themselves obeying the promptings of reverence in averting thought from the subject-matter of faith, are yielding to an influence which makes faith impossible. We may so lull reason to rest, that mere desire may choose our creed for us. We may be all believing that Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried, descended into hell, and the third day rose from the dead, for no other reason but that we wish to believe it; and those who have achieved this result, have set up an impassable barrier between belief and all that makes belief worth having. If Christians neither do anything, nor refrain from doing anything, because they believe in one who was stronger than death, is it not in part because life must be moulded on what is certain, and they have chosen a creed they dare not test? Is it the same to them whether a thing is true or false, so long as they are able to fancy they believe it? For all who must answer, if they were honest, that it is so, Truth itself becomes false, "like fairy money," which, in the words of Locke, "though it were gold in the hand of him who gave it, yet turns to dust in the hand of him who takes it." So it has been, we believe, with the central miracle of Christianity. It would be, with one who believed it, an unquestionable manifestation of power in the author of Christianity. It might not throw any light on his moral character, but none could believe that he rose from the dead in the same way that they believed any other unquestioned fact of life, and suspect that the religion which traced its source to him set up an ideal of feminine weakness as the ideal for the human race. If this suspicion slumbers in the mind of many a man who would shrink from abjuring the name of Christian, we ought to welcome a work which, in bringing forward a theory affording an intellectual complement to that suspicion in its most extreme form, forces us to recognise and meet it. There may seem a long interval between the dim belief in the background of many minds that Christ was under a delusion as to his true nature, and this startling suggestion that he mistook a fainting fit for death; but in reality, this difference is trifling, and those who hold his supernatural claims to be justified by his nature have already to meet, under the insidious form of vague feeling, the antagonism expressed in these pages under that definite logical aspect in which all antagonism, whether true or false, is a help towards the truth.

Now the first question for any one who is considering whether a particular line of evidence is sufficient to support a certain conclusion is,—"What is the kind of proof the case admits of?" We should concede at once to any pleading on the side ably represented here, that no evidence for the Resurrection of Christ is contained in the New Testament that is strong enough to bear the weight of a stupendous improbability; indeed, we should go farther than this, and assert that if we confine ourselves to the contemporary records, evidence, in the sense which an English lawyer puts upon the word, hardly exists at all. But then it ought also to be granted that this is simply another way of saying that the transactions recorded took place among ignorant and credulous peasants, and were not written down till long afterwards. If, thus transmitted, they were proved according to our ideal of proof, the record would be as miraculous as the facts. Now if miracle is conceivable at all, it is conceivable that we should have records of miracle given without miracle. We do not inquire

what is the proper evidence of miracle, but only assert that we must not begin by assuming that the evidence is to be itself miraculous,—an assumption, we think, virtually contained in the suggestion that distinct medical evidence of death is to be one step in the proof of Christ's resurrection. It would be almost as wonderful that that should be forthcoming, under the circumstances, as that one should return from the dead.

The history of all knowledge testifies to the importance and to the difficulty of answering this opening question aright. No large acquisition to the intellectual inheritance of humanity, we believe, was ever made without a struggle with and victory over that tendency of our nature by which we look for proof in the wrong place. We have remarked upon the tendency as it shows itself with regard to miracle, it may be illustrated also from that region of human speculation which is furthest removed from miracle. It arrested the progress of physical science altogether during centuries of the keenest intellectual activity of our race, by substituting thought for observation as the method of discovery. It shows itself constantly as a demand for exactly those traces of origin which development necessarily obliterates,—an assertion which might be illustrated from recent discussions on the origin of language. It is commented on by Professor Tyndall in his recent lectures on Light, as exhibiting itself in a mind singularly free from every similar intellectual weakness,—that of Mr. Mill, whose opinion is quoted that the undulatory theory of light is to be regarded as an unproved hypothesis, and who is answered that it is unproved precisely as the theory of gravitation is unproved, both theories having all the proof that it is possible they should have in accounting for all the facts to which they apply. There is no truth that we might not fancy to be unproved if we looked for proof in the wrong place.

We shall certainly look in the wrong place for the proof of Christ's Resurrection, if we seek it in the form a modern lawyer would accept. This much we might say, if we had never read a line of the Gospels, supposing we knew the character of the persons concerned in the transactions they narrate, or even the mere date of those transactions. What we understand by evidence is almost as modern as the electric telegraph. What was Cicero's notion of evidence? Good evidence is no more to be looked for in the records of the first ages of Christianity than a printed book.

"Very well," it may be answered, "then that is simply saying the origin of Christianity is an insoluble problem. We want evidence of its culminating miracle; if it is not to be had, that miracle must take its place with the siege of Troy, as something we have data neither to assert nor deny."

That is, we think, exactly the right attitude towards the great central miracle of the Christian creed of all who hold that natural law contains the ultimate truth concerning the life of man, but of those alone. The description may be made clearer by an illustration drawn from that very body of fact which, to our thinking, contains the most forcible protests against the tendencies developed in its students. Suppose—and the case, though impossible, is quite conceivable—a mature intellect, thoroughly acquainted with the law of gravitation, and knowing nothing more of natural law whatever. Now imagine some unscientific person informing this follower of Newton that he has once seen a needle rise from a table at rest and attach itself to a little bar held above it. Surely the natural response of the philosopher would be, "You must have been mistaken." We cannot imagine the evidence which, while the instance was before it as an isolated fact, could do more than induce such a mind to suspend opinion as to the mysterious powers of this little bar. And for one who knows nothing of the spiritual forces which are as little to be guessed from the whole system of natural force, as molecular forces are from that of gravitation, there is, we venture to affirm, enough evidence in the history of the time when Christianity arose, and in the whole progress of civilisation since, to make him doubt whether something did not occur at its birth which made a future life the all-absorbing reality to ordinary men. That any candid intellect should examine the History of Christianity without seeing cause even to doubt whether there was not at the time it arose some wonderful shifting of the centre of gravity in men's interests seems to us impossible. There certainly was a change in the direction of their hopes and fears; expectations which before had been vague and dim suddenly became vivid and definite, some vista unquestionably appeared to be opened that dwarfed this present world, and made it interesting merely as the antechamber to another. We can hardly fancy anything that is matter of history more certain than this. On the moral influence of this change we say nothing. That is a point on which we can conceive every variety of opinion. But we are concerned

now only with the fact of that transplantation of interest from this world to another, concerning which difference of instructed opinion, we suppose, does not exist. The question is, what caused it? What made men so sure of a future that was so dim before? What emptied this world of its power to reward and punish, and transferred all sanction to another? The answer to that question depends on the place that Physical Law occupies in the mind. If that is supposed to be ultimate, we do not think any historical evidence can prove an event which goes beyond it. To revert to our illustration, you cannot expect a thinker who recognises no natural law but gravitation to be convinced that a little bar can overcome the attraction of the earth by any unscientific testimony. And in like manner, though it appears to us monstrous to explain a change in the hopes and fears of the civilised world by the delusion of a hysterical patient, and the accident of a bungling execution, yet we allow that it would be a still greater strain on belief to demand that the very existence of a spiritual world should be made manifest by this one miracle. But if this spiritual world is already the ultimate reality of experience, if all its laws have been discerned as predominant over those of the physical world, in the same way that molecular force is predominant over gravitation, then we do not see what difficulty there is in recognising that these apparent indications of a sudden flash from behind the curtain that hides the life beyond the grave point to a real event. Now, in urging that experience may make the narrative of the Resurrection wear an aspect of verisimilitude, we do not, as those who take this line of argument are sometimes accused of doing, say that this experience is itself evidence. "Faith," says our author, with point and force, "is the evidence of things not seen, not insufficient evidence of things alleged to have been seen." The fact that men have known a companionship associated with no visible form now would never have revealed to them anything about a person who left this earth 1,800 years ago, nor can any event in the life of that person rise to the level of the certainty with which they believe in his present nearness. The unwillingness to believe in this inequality of conviction is the seed of fanaticism. But Experience makes credible what it could never have revealed, and it is but judging this event in history as we judge others to let our belief in it depend on what we allow ourselves to expect.

It remains to notice some of the many forms of objection which such a line of argument might provoke, that of the Physicist, however, being in great measure anticipated. It would seem to him that we were endeavouring to shake the most universal of all generalisations by means of an argument to which he has great difficulty in giving any attention whatever. The event called Death has proved irreversible in the whole domain known to him, and we ask him to believe that it has once proved reversible, on the ground that men who ignored every principle on which he has arrived at truth were firmly convinced of the fact. We think, as we have already said, that this is enough to produce doubt in a logical mind, but in reality very few scientific men admit any doubt in the matter. We have dwelt on the physicist's side of the question, because we think the book we are noticing contains exactly such an explanation of the Resurrection as they are likely to adopt, as opposed to that mythic theory which would commend itself chiefly to the school of historic scepticism. We should hold them false to their own principles only when they refused even to doubt of a fact which we fully admit, that while they judge it on their own principles exclusively it is impossible for them to believe.

The pious Christian would be tempted here to use language curiously similar to that of the man of science. He would turn with the same impatience from the reminder that this is a historical question, and with the same sense of inadequacy from the actual testimony of history. He would bring the same vehement persuasion as to the principles involved in the issue, and would be equally unwilling to subordinate those principles to a broad critical view of the complex considerations involved. Both would feel as if the concession that History must be the ultimate arbiter as to the resurrection of Christ made their most prized convictions hostages in a doubtful cause. But even the devotees of physical law would be less active in protest against any apparent rival to their dominant principle than those who would guard a faith they share with the poor and the ignorant, from what they would regard as the attempt to change it to the privilege of men of letters. If the crowning fact of Christ's history were to be surrendered to any judgment which the poor and the ignorant could not exercise, the Gospel of Christ would, from this point of view, seem to be no longer a Gospel for Humanity.

Lastly, the student of history himself might join in the protest. He would be inclined to urge, we think, that the argument proved

too much, that a strong persuasion is more contagious than scarlet fever, and that to make belief a reason for itself would open the door for many unquestionable delusions to establish their right of entry. Christianity, he would say, must, under such a test, take its chance with many competitors, and share with them the verdict pronounced in the well-known words of Gibbon, "Equally true for the peasant, equally false for the philosopher, and for the magistrate equally useful."

To the last objector we would answer merely, that if growth and permanence are no guarantee for conviction, there is no test of truth at all, but that we are ready to accept this test in what it disproves as well as what it proves. So far as it disproves the theory of Christianity being a sort of patent for commerce with the supernatural, taken out by the founder and jealously guarded by his followers, it removes the greatest obstacle to the teaching of Christ. Our answer to the other two objections would be that they are founded on a confusion between the fact in question and the principles which must be accepted by any one who believes it. There is, we have conceded to the physicist, no evidence of the Resurrection convincing to one who regards it as a startling dislocation in the connection of cause and effect. Before any man can believe in the resurrection of Christ, he must believe that there are causes as definite as heat or electricity, which eye cannot see, nor ear hear, nor the most delicate scientific apparatus detect; and he must believe that these causes are ultimate, that you cannot get beyond them into the world of the balance and the prism and the electric battery. Men of science are in our day so far from believing this, that they are apt to look upon any attempt to express it as the use of metaphorical language. And when they hear of facts which if they are true must illustrate the predominance of the spiritual law over the natural, they suppose that the evidence of the fact must, to be convincing, prove the existence of the law, as well as its operation. Such a demand is unreasonable, from whichever side it is made. If the death of Christ on the cross, and his subsequent appearance to his disciples, had been investigated by Pontius Pilate, and recorded by Tacitus, it still could not win credence from one logical mind to which the world of the unseen remained to be proved. The life-giving power must be experienced in the moral world, before it can be received as a possible reality in the physical one.

The Christian merely reverses the mistake of the physicist, supposing that the law must prove the illustration, as the other supposes that the illustration must prove the law. He looks on a world of sin and suffering (a world hardly present to the imagination of one occupied in contemplation of natural law), and he feels that in the struggle to remove something of its suffering and its sin man cannot stand alone. He does not look to history only for the fact of redemption, he knows in himself and in others that there is a real force that overcomes the downward gravitation of self and of the world, and in the words of one through whom this change influenced mankind, "makes it delightful to escape those things which formerly his only delight was to enjoy." And when he finds in history a narrative that answers to this experience, it needs to him actually less proof than anything else that has ever happened. Incredible that God should not have granted suffering and sinful man some utterance of sympathy, some protest against evil, some promise of deliverance! Perhaps it is hardly too much to say that for a mind in the state we are contemplating, the burden of proof lies with one who finds difficulty in the narrative that ends with the rising of the Son of Man from the dead, "and the hope of eternal life." Of course, this is a most unreasonable demand,—an event may prove a principle, but no principle proves an event. Events can be made known to us only through history. The evidence that an unseen King is ruling us now must be set forth in the lives thus ruled, but if others are to be convinced that he once wore human shape and died to show that death was not the goal of human destiny, it must be through a strictly intellectual method, through the scrupulous application of historical criticism and of a logic purged from rhetoric.

SPECIMENS OF EARLY ENGLISH.*

THE book before us is the second volume of *Specimens of Early English*, edited by the Rev. R. Morris and the Rev. W. W. Skeat, and issued by the Clarendon Press. It ranges over nearly a century of English literature, the earliest "Specimen," part of Robert of Gloucester's "Reign of William the Conqueror" having been written about the year 1298, while the last specimen, the "Tale of the Coffers," by John of Gower, was not penned until about the year 1393.

* *Specimens of Early English*. By Rev. R. Morris, LL.D., and Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A. Clarendon Press.