

THE GREAT ST. BERNARD

HOSPICE.

B & F. EVAN REVIEW.

JULY 1868.

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and ministers, there to receive the communion with the rest of their neighbours"—(Canon 28).

Other points can be easily mentioned—such as the reading of the offertory, and the use of the prayer for the Church Militant on every occasion, and the consequent lengthening of the service and shortening of the time for the more important duty of the minister, namely, the exposition of God's word. Many earnest ministers of the Church are in the habit of having prayer meetings, which are sometimes partly conducted by laymen, or by members of other churches. It is very questionable whether all such meetings do not come under the head of "conventicles," and whether they might not be condemned by a rigorous exposition of Church law.

Many of the clergy never read the whole of the marriage service, the wording of which, indeed, is too plain and unfastidious for modern taste in general. But in this they unquestionably violate both the rubric and the Act of Uniformity, though custom may now, perhaps, secure them from all penalties. Instead of curtailing this liberty, we would prefer to see the same liberty taken with both the Baptismal and Burial Services.

Some, also, of the Evangelical clergy are wont occasionally to use extempore prayer before their sermons—a very laudable custom, indeed, as we think, and one the principle of which is approved of in the 55th canon. But there are many inclined even to forbid this small liberty; and, as practised, there is little doubt that it is unrubrical, though the using of a collect as a prayer before the sermon is equally so.

Nay, more, private meetings of ministers to consult together as to the course to be taken by them in any emergency are forbidden by Canon 73, and it may be questioned whether that Canon could not be applied to forbid many committee meetings held for divers purposes.

We do not care to refer to several Canons which are obsolete and absurd, as those respecting the exorcism of devils, the cut of ecclesiastical coats, or the "night caps" "ecclesiastical persons are permitted to wear. Our object is only to indicate some points in which clergymen of the Church of England have set at nought the regulations of their Church, and, laudably, as we think, have broken through her ordinances. One point only we shall in conclusion refer to, and that is the reading of the Apocryphal Lessons in the Church. We know not what the Royal Commissioners may recommend on this head, but meanwhile we have to consider matters as they are, not as they may be.

Evangelical men, as a rule, have passed over these lessons, and substituted in their room others from Canonical Scripture.

The "admonition to all ministers ecclesiastical" prefixed to the second volume of the "Homilies" may be pleaded in defence of their conduct ; whether legally or not, we do not now inquire.

But what we do ask is this, Whether the successors of Newton, Romaine, and Simeon, will see with complacency these liberties which we have recounted curtailed ? whether, in order to oblige Ritualists to dress a little less like Roman priests while they still are permitted to preach Popish doctrine, men who love the gospel and desire liberty to set forth Christ and his salvation, and to work freely for the conversion of souls, will allow themselves to be restricted in their liberties ? whether, in order to drive the stag from the pasture, they will permit bishops and convocation to bridle, saddle, and ride them.

It has not, indeed, come to this in England, but it is not unlikely it will soon. World-loving men may be indignant if Evangelicals will not submit to a compromise, which may put an end to the outward extravagances of Ritualism, while it deprives preachers of the gospel of their liberty. Moderate men, as they are called, may admire mutual concession, and may be willing to leave us the liberty of preaching, if we only resign the liberty of practising. But if any unworthy compromise be suggested and carried into effect, we hope to see a noble secession of Evangelical men from the ranks of the Church, a secession large in numbers, and as earnest, we trust, in feeling, as was that of the brave Puritans of old. Regardless of any fears of disestablishment, or any dread of secession, we trust the cry of the Evangelicals will be, We will compromise none of our liberties, and we will abate none of our freedom of action, while we strive earnestly to drive from the Church the men who desire peace with Rome, and wish to lead us back to the darkness of the middle ages.

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ART. IV.—*The Great St Bernard Hospice.*

THERE is no episode in continental travel more interesting at the time, and more suggestive of pleasing memories afterwards, than a visit to the Great St Bernard Hospice. It does one moral as well as physical good. The imagination is stimulated by the associations of the place ; and the heart filled with the feverish unrest and love of excitement, so characteristic of the present age, is rebuked and calmed by the loneliness and monotony of the life led there. Every one has heard of its dogs and monks, and its travellers rescued from

the snow storms. Pictures of it used to excite our wonder in the days of childhood ; descriptions of it in almost every Swiss tourist's book have interested us in maturer years ; while not a few of us have made a pilgrimage to the spot, and thus given to the romantic dreams and fancies of early life a local habitation and a name. Still, trite and worn-out as the subject may appear, it is impossible by any amount of familiarity to divest it of its undying charm ; and those who have visited the scene, so far from their interest in it being exhausted, have only been made more enthusiastic in its favour, and more anxious to compare or contrast their own experience with that of every new traveller who writes upon it. For these reasons we offer no apology for laying the following sketch of the monastery before the readers of the *Evangelical Review*, at a time when the annual migratory instinct is impelling multitudes away from the smoke and roar of cities to the green haunts and the primitive life of nature, and stirring up in the hearts of lonely students, weary of mental labour, longings for the blue lakes of the Highlands, or the gleaming snows of the Alps, to restore the balance between mind and body. Subjects of this kind will now excite an amount of attention which they would not have received amid the pressing cares and duties of the busy season, and will be felt to be in harmony with the mood of men's minds, and with the pursuits in which they are engaged. Especially is such a subject at such a time suitable for the pages of this journal, inasmuch as it rests upon an ecclesiastical basis, and combines in a felicitous manner the studies of the theologian with the adventures and enjoyments of the tourist.

Before proceeding to describe the Hospice itself, with its scenery and historical associations, it is proper to explain the circumstances of its origin. There are three monks of the name of Bernard whose names occupy a high place in the Roman calendar of saints. All of them were celebrated men, and left their mark upon the age in which they lived. St Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, on the Lake of Geneva, was, during the first half of the twelfth century, the oracle of all Christian Europe. His austere mode of life, inspiring eloquence, boldness of language, and supposed prophetic powers, raised him to a nobler rank than that of any pope or cardinal, and made him by far the most influential ecclesiastic of the middle ages. He was the umpire of princes and bishops, and his voice in the councils of the church was regarded as almost divine. By historians he is regarded with interest as the great apostle of the second crusade ; but a sweeter charm invests his memory as the author of works in which an enthusiastic mysticism blends with an eminently practical aim. Luther says of him, ' If there has ever been a pious monk who feared God, it was

St Bernard, whom also I hold in much higher esteem than all other monks and priests throughout the globe." The monk whose name is imperishably associated with the Alpine Pass and Hospice, must not be confounded with this remarkable man, nor yet with St Bernard of Cluny, the pious author of that exquisite hymn, so common now in our modern collections, "Jerusalem the Golden." Bernard de Menthon had his own claims to the gratitude and admiration of mankind, though they were not so great as those of his more distinguished namesakes. His history displays more romance than is usually found in the calm, uneventful life of a Roman ecclesiastic, and deserves a brief notice in passing. Ibertis in his admirable "Essai Historique" informs us, that he was born in the Chateau de Menthon on the Lake of Annecy, about the year 923. His parents were of noble extraction, and possessed extensive estates in Savoy. Being their only child, they were naturally anxious that he should perpetuate the hereditary honours of the family, and for this purpose they planned a match between him and a rich and accomplished heiress who lived in the neighbourhood. Bernard, however, was of a studious and religious temperament, and encouraged by his tutor, had resolved to give himself up to a monastic life. He was therefore for a long time deaf to the entreaties of his parents. In the hope that his resolution would melt away if brought for a while under the immediate spell of Marguerite's beauty, he was induced to pay a visit to the Chateau de Miolans, where she resided; his tutor in the mean time having been dismissed. This ruse seemed at first to be successful; none could come within the influence of the lovely person and accomplished mind of the sweet "Pearl of Savoy" without being fascinated. To see her was to love her; and even Bernard himself began to think that possibly life might be happier as well as nobler spent with her than in the solitude of the cloister. When at intervals he had recourse to his religious studies, he could no longer peruse calmly the ancient books which had formerly been to him a passion. Instead of carrying with him the most abstract meanings of his author, his mind wandered to a thousand indefinite remembrances—the last smile on Marguerite's lip, the last pressure of her hand, the last soft word she uttered. So matters progressed to the satisfaction of all parties, until at last the day was fixed for uniting the fortunes of the two families by the marriage of the young couple. The night before the wedding, Bernard retired to his chamber, not in the blissful state in which most lovers are supposed to spend their last night of single blessedness, but greatly agitated by contending feelings. Doubts of the propriety of the course he was pursuing troubled his mind; and though

nclination strongly whispered that he was doing right, yet conscience kept ever suggesting that he was sacrificing the joys of heaven for the pleasures of earth, that he had put his hand to the plough, and that therefore it was a mortal sin to look back. In this painful state of perplexity, he prayed long and fervently to his patron saint for direction. The chronicle states, that St Nicholas de Myra appeared to him surrounded by a brilliant halo which illumined the whole room, and shewed to him that it was clearly his duty in the circumstances to mortify the flesh and become a monk. Acting upon the ungallant advice of his ghostly visitant, he wrote a letter of farewell to his parents, left them to make what excuses they could to the disappointed bride, and packing up a few necessary things, escaped at midnight through the window, and halted not until he had put the Graian Alps between him and the abode where his spiritual ruin had been so nearly consummated. Crossing over the pass which now bears his name, he came to Aosta in Italy ; and there, having completed his noviciate, he settled down as a parish priest, and became in due season archdeacon of the district. So great was his zeal and piety that the bishop of Aosta associated him with himself in the congenial task of establishing schools and churches in remote localities, and acting generally as an evangelist among the then half-savage, half-heathen, population of the Swiss valleys, so that he soon became known far and wide by the name of "the apostle of the Alps." Owing to his local position, Aosta lying at the termination of the two roads which led over the Pennine and Graian Alps, now known as the Great and Little St Bernard Passes, he had frequent opportunities of becoming acquainted with the dangers to which travellers making use of these routes were exposed, not only from the snow storms and frequent avalanches, but also from the hordes of fierce banditti by which they were infested. He therefore formed, at an early period of his ministry, the noble project of converting these savage marauders by his own personal efforts, and making the passes as safe as possible by the erection of Christian houses of refuge on the wildest and most exposed points. In these efforts he was successful beyond his most sanguine anticipations. The banditti in a short time were induced to abandon their lawless habits, and a comfortable substantial hospice was erected on the summit of each of the passes, and provision made in them for the maintenance of religious worship, and the relief of passing travellers. Both the establishments were committed to the care of monks of the order of St Augustine. Over the principal hospice, St Bernard himself presided for upwards of forty years, and by his unexampled hospitality and sanctity extended its fame over

the whole of Europe. The last act of his life was a journey to Rome, then a most arduous enterprise, undertaken to promote the interests of his beloved institution. Having procured, in a personal interview with Pope Sergius IV., the Papal sanction to his foundation of regular canons, and thus completed his carefully organised scheme, he died at the good old age of eighty-five, at Novara, in the month of June 1008. After his death, he was canonised and admitted to a lofty niche in the Christian Valhalla. His body was buried in the churchyard of the place where he died ; but his skull and arm are deposited as relics under the principal altar of the hospice-chapel, and there regarded with great veneration.

Mr King, in his delightful book "The Italian Valleys of the Alps," gives an account of a most touching and romantic incident in the saint's life, while acting as the superior of the Great St Bernard Hospice. One day an aged couple, weary and travel-worn, came to the door and desired to see him. They told him that, attracted by the fame of his piety and wisdom, they had crossed the Graian Alps to ask his advice regarding a sorrowful event, which for many long years had made their life inexpressibly sad to them. They had an only child, a young man of great talent and amiable disposition, upon whom they looked as the prop of their house. They wished him to marry the beautiful and accomplished daughter of a neighbouring nobleman ; and for a while he seemed to consent to the engagement. But when all was ready for the marriage, he suddenly and unaccountably disappeared, and never returned to their home. They sought him far and near, but from that day they had heard no tidings of him. And now their sole desire was to see him once more before they died. They had undertaken this long journey in their old age to ask him what they should do in order to gratify the fond yearning of their hearts. Inexpressibly touched by the sight of his parents' grief, and the ravages which years and one consuming sorrow had wrought on their frames, the superior went hastily out to conceal his emotion. Something in his appearance and manner awoke a slumbering chord in the old couple's bosom ; but they banished the wild thought of recognition as utterly unlikely. In a few minutes the superior returned with tear-wet eyes, and in sobbing words proclaimed himself to be their Bernard, their long lost son. No language could describe the joy of the parents as they clasped him to their bosoms. Proud of his reputation, cheered by his affection, the aged couple spent a few weeks of bliss in the convent, and then returned to their home, rejoicing, like Simeon of old, that the one supreme wish of their life had been crowned at last. "Happy parents," says the chronicler, "doubtless in the home of immor-



tality you now possess that son whom you so long mourned in this land of exile, restored to you in an eternity of happiness, where separations and afflictions are no more." Such are the romantic associations connected with the origin of the hospice.

About the beginning of August, two years ago, we had the pleasure of visiting this celebrated spot in company with two friends. We set out early in the morning in a char-a-banc, or native droskey, drawn by a mule from the "Hotel Grande-Maison-Porte," at Martigny, the Roman Octodurus, and the seat of the ancient bishops of Valais. It is a low, damp, uninteresting place, much infested with a small, black gnat, whose sting is very painful, bred in the marshes of the Rhine. Being a capital centre of excursions to Lago Maggiore over the Simplon, to Aosta and Turin over the St Bernard pass, and to Chamouni by the Tête-Noire, or the Col de Balme, it is exceedingly gay and animated every evening during the summer, owing to the arrival of tourists, and desolate and deserted every morning, owing to their departure. The sun was shining with almost tropical heat, rapidly ripening the walnuts along the avenues of the town, and the grapes hanging in rich profusion on the trellises of the houses; the sky was without a cloud, and everything promised a delightful trip. Passing through a small unsavoury village called Martigny le Bourg, our route crossed the Dranse by a substantial bridge; and at a little distance beyond, a guide-post indicated, to the right the way to Chamouni, and to the left to St Bernard. The entrance by the pass of the Dranse is magnificent, reminding us, though on a grander scale, of the mouth of Glenlyon in Perthshire. Lofty slopes, and precipices richly wooded, approached from both sides so closely that there was hardly room left for the passage of the powerful stream, which, turbid with glacier mud, roared and foamed over enormous blocks of stone. The road, without parapet or railing, overhung the river, and in one place was carried through a tunnel called the *Gallerie Monaye*, upwards of two hundred feet long, cut out of the solid rock. We passed through scattered villages sweetly embosomed among walnut and chesnut trees; but presenting many saddening signs of the poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants. An unusually large proportion of the people were afflicted with goitres, and here and there we saw sitting on the thresholds of their dirty chalets loathsome cretins, basking in the sun, whose short, shambling figures and unnaturally large round heads and leering faces afflicted us amid the beauty of nature around like a nightmare. The ground was everywhere most carefully cultivated. Every particle of soil among the rocks, however scanty or steep, was terraced up with walls, and made to yield grass, corn, or potatoes.

High up on the brink of precipices that seemed almost inaccessible, bright green spots indicated the laborious care of the peasantry; and to these, as soon as the winter snows disappeared, sheep were carried up every year, one by one on men's backs, and left there till the end of summer, when they were carried down, considerably fattened, in the same picturesque fashion. The lower meadows by the road side were exceedingly beautiful, of the most vivid green, covered with myriads of purple crocuses and scarlet vetches, and murmurous with the hum of innumerable grasshoppers. Gay butterflies, and insects of golden and crimson hues, never seen in this country, flitted past in the warm sunshine; and the fragrance of the Arolla pines filled all the air with a highly stimulating aromatic balm. As it was the festal day of the "Assumption of the Virgin," one of the grandest fetes of the Roman Catholic Church, groups of peasants,—the men dressed in the brown cotton blouses peculiar to the district, and the women wearing a curious head-dress consisting of a broad tinselled ribbon plaited and set on edge round a cap, each carrying her prayer-book in her hand, wrapped in a white pocket handkerchief,—passed us on their way to the chapel at Martigny. On all sides we noticed exceedingly distinct traces of two great natural phenomena which had overwhelmed the district, separated from each other by thousands of years. Almost every exposed rock was polished and striated by ancient glaciers; and the granite boulders, which they had brought down with them, were seen perched upon the schist and limestone precipices hundreds of feet above the river. The whole valley from St Bernard to Martigny, with its tributary glens, must have been the channel of a vast system of glaciers descending from the crest of the Pennine Alps during the glacial epoch, when all the glaciers of Europe and Asia were far more extensive than they are now. The other phenomenon to which allusion has been made, was also caused by glacier action, but of a different kind. In one of the narrow side gorges of the valley, called the Val de Bagne, there is a glacier known as the Glacier de Getroz, which hangs suspended over a cliff five hundred feet high. The end of this glacier is continually breaking off, and falling over the precipice into the bottom of the gorge, where the fragments of ice accumulate and form enormous heaps. In the year 1818 these fallen masses had been piled up to an unparalleled extent, and choked up the narrow, vault-like outlet of the gorge. Behind this icy dam the water of the east branch of the Dranse increased, until at length a lake was formed, nearly a mile long, a quarter of a mile wide, and about two hundred feet deep. The inhabitants of the valley watched anxiously the gradual rise of the waters

knowing that when the warm season should come the icy bank would melt, and the reservoir be at once discharged. Many of them fled in the spring, with their goods and cattle, to the higher pasturages. A tunnel, seven hundred feet long, was cut into the ice, which gradually let off a considerable part of the water without any damage. But a hot June sun and the warmth of the water so gnawed into the ice that on the afternoon of the 16th of the month the barrier burst all at once, and a prodigious mass of water, upwards of five hundred and thirty millions of cubic feet, rushed down the valley with fearful fury, carrying everything before it, and marking its course all the way to the lake of Geneva, fifty miles distant, with gigantic ruins. Many lives were lost; and property to nearly the value of a million sterling was destroyed. To prevent a repetition of this awful calamity, for a similar event occurred in 1595, and the same cause is still in operation, spring water is led by means of a long wooden trough to the dam of ice formed by the falling fragments of the glacier, and the warmth of this water cuts like a saw the ice as soon as deposited, and thus cleaves a passage for the river and prevents its waters from accumulating. The autograph of this tremendous inundation was written, like the mystic "Mene, mene" of Belshazzar's palace, in the huge stones in the bed of the river, and in the gravelly and stony spots far up the sides of the valley, mingling with the relics of ancient glacier action, but easily distinguishable from them.

Passing through Sembranchier, a picturesque village, with the ruins of an enormous castle of the Emperor Sigismund on a hill in its vicinity, and Orsières, situated at the junction of the valleys of Ferret and Entremont, distinguished by a very ancient tower rising high above its curious houses, the road ascended by a series of well-executed zig-zags through a rich and highly-cultivated country to Liddes. Deep down among wild rocks the Dranse pursued its turbulent course unseen, revealing its presence only by an all-pervading murmur in the air. The view extended over an undulating upland landscape of green fields, diversified by wooden frames for drying the corn, somewhat like the curious structures for drying hay to be seen on Norwegian mountain farms. The huge summit of Mont Velan, 12,000 feet high, formed the most conspicuous object on the horizon before us, its dark rocks contrasting finely with its dazzling snows and the rich fields of deep blue sky above it. A cool breeze blew down upon us from the snowy heights, and was inexpressibly refreshing after the stifling heat of the valley. About four o'clock in the afternoon we came to a strange old village, called St Pierre,—the last on the route,—situated on a kind of plateau, about 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. It was a very

dirty, miserable place; and we were victimised by the inn-keeper of the Hotel au Dejeuner de Napoleon, having been charged fifteen francs for a blue scraggy chicken, not much larger than a sparrow, a plate of potatoes fried in rancid grease, and a bottle of Beaujolais wine as sour as vinegar. A remarkably quaint old church, built in the tenth century, still exists in the village. A tablet, with a Latin inscription by Bishop Hugo of Geneva, the founder of the church, commemorates a victory obtained by the inhabitants over the Saracens, who had ravaged the district with fire and sword. A Roman mile-stone is also built into the wall of the enclosure near the tower. In modern times the place is chiefly interesting as being one of the resting-places of Napoleon in his passage over the Alps, and the birth-place of his famous guide. A little beyond it there is a deep gorge with a splendid, full-bodied waterfall, which we visited. The sides of the pools and the sloping banks were fringed with clusters of tall monkshood, whose blue flowers mingled with the snowy foam of the water. Across the gorge, a frail bridge, with an arched gateway, constructed by Charlemagne, gave access to the main road, which led through the forest of St Pierre in the Défilé de Charreire, and was cut in many places out of the solid rock. Below us, at the foot of perpendicular precipices several hundred feet in depth, the Dranse, still a powerful stream, formed innumerable foaming cascades. There was no wall or abutment to protect us. The off-hand wheel of the conveyance was always within a foot of the edge. We were sitting on the side nearest the precipice, and often could have easily let fall a stone from our hand right down into the river, nearly a thousand feet below. The least false movement on the part of the driver would inevitably have hurled us over to destruction. And yet we went safely and pleasantly along at full speed, our hearts now and then, when we came to a more trying place than usual, perhaps a little higher than their normal position. It was in this defile of Charreire that Napoleon encountered his most formidable difficulties. The old road was declared by Marescat, chief of the engineers, as "barely passable for artillery." "It is possible! let us start then!" was the heroic reply of his master. It was a favourite maxim with him that wherever two men could set foot, an army had the means of passing; and he acted upon this maxim on this occasion. As it was about the end of May, the snows were melting fast, and thus greatly increased the dangers and difficulties of the route. "The artillery carriages were taken to pieces and packed on mules; the ammunition was also thus transported; whilst the guns themselves, placed on the trunks of trees hollowed out, were dragged up by main strength,—a hundred soldiers being attached to each cannon,

for which labourious undertaking they received the sum of 1,200 francs. At the Hospice, each soldier partook of the hospitality of the brethren."

In about an hour and a-half we came to a solitary inn, called the Cantine de Proz, kept by a man of the name of Dorset, who is very civil to travellers. No other dwelling was in sight. A number of diminutive cows wandered about on the short smooth turf, bright with the lovely Alpine clover; the sweet tinkling of their bells, combined with the monotonous sighing of the infant Dranse, giving us a lonely and far away feeling, as if we had reached the end of the world. A corner of the Glacier de Menouve, of dazzling whiteness, appeared in sight, far up among stern precipitous rocks, of a peculiarly bald and weather-worn appearance. Above the cantine, a little plain, called the Plan de Proz, about 5,500 feet above the sea, sloped up, seamed in every direction with grey water courses, but gemmed with innumerable brilliant clusters of the snowy gentian. Leaving our conveyance at the inn, and taking with us the mule and the driver as a guide, we set off on foot across the plain, to the entrance of a kind of gorge, called the Defilé de Marengo, which is exceedingly steep and difficult of ascent. A considerable stream, confined within narrow bounds, roars and foams within a few feet of the pathway, so that in wet weather its swollen waters must render the defile impassable. Among the rocks, wherever any particles of soil lodged, rich cushions of moss spread themselves, wild auriculas nestled in the crevices, and large patches of crowberry and blaeberry bushes crept over the boulders. These blaeberry bushes fringed the pathway up to within a short distance of the Hospice; and nowhere in Scotland have we seen the fruit so plentiful or so large and luxurious. Basketfuls could be gathered in a few minutes without diverging more than a yard or two from our course; and yet it seems never to be touched. The sides of the stream were decked with the large woolly leaves and brown flowers of the Alpine Tussilago, which takes the place at this elevation of the common Butter-bur, whose enormous umbrella-like leaves form such a picturesque adornment of lowland rivulets. After an hour's stiff ascent, we came to two ruinous-looking chalets, built of loose stones, one of which served as a place of refuge for cattle, while the other was the old morgue, now used as a shelter-place for travellers, where they wait, if overtaken by storms, till the servants of the monastery come down with a dog to their rescue, which they do every morning when the weather is unusually severe. They bring with them on such occasions wine and provisions to restore the exhausted and half-frozen traveller; and guided by the faithful dogs, who alone know the way,—thirty feet of snow being not

unfrequently accumulated in the worst parts of the pass,—they are all brought safely to the hospitable shelter of the convent. From this point the defile receives the ominous name of the Valley of Death ; and the track is marked by tall, black poles, and here and there by a cross, marking the scene of some tragic event. Within a short distance of the Hospice, an iron cross commemorates the death of one of the monks who perished on that spot by an avalanche in November 1845. Between these grim memorials of those to whom the place had been indeed the valley of the shadow of death, we toiled up the rough and arduous path, panting and perspiring, greatly aided by our alpenstocks. We thought the way would never end. We turned corner after corner of the defile, but still no trace of human habitation. Our knees were about to give way with fatigue, the rarity of the air was making itself known to us in thirst and headache, our pulse had advanced from 60 beats at Martigny to 83 at this elevation, and we would gladly have rested awhile. But the shades of night were falling fast, so the banner with the strange device had still to be unfurled. We had in our own experience during this ascent a more vivid conception than we could otherwise have realised of the feverish longing which the lost wanderer in the snow has for a place of refuge and rest. If we, a mere summer tourist, bent upon reaching the Hospice only to gratify a love of adventure, and to realise a romantic sensation, had such a desire, how much more ardent must be the longing of the poor traveller, overtaken by the dreadful *tourmente*, blinded and benumbed by the furious drift, to whom reaching the Hospice is a matter of life and death. At long last, at the very summit of the pass, we saw the Hospice looming above us, its windows glittering in the setting sun. Fatigue and weariness all forgotten, we eagerly clambered up the remaining part of the ascent, along a paved road overhanging a precipice, and in a few minutes stood beside the open door. At first we could hardly realize the fact that the convent, about which we had read so much, which we had so often seen in pictures and pictured in dreams, was actually before us. It had a very familiar look, appearing exactly as we had imagined. We did not approach it in the orthodox fashion,—exhausted and half-frozen amid the blinding drifts of a snow-storm, and dragged in on a dog's back ! On the contrary, the evening was calm and summer-like ; the surrounding peaks retained the last crimson blush of the exquisitely beautiful *abend-gluhen*, or after-glow of sunset ; the little lake beside the convent mirrored the building on its tranquil bosom ; the snow had retreated from the low grounds, and only lingered on the lesser heights in the form of hardened patches wedged in the shady recesses of the rocks. We could not have seen the place under more

avourable auspices ; and yet, nevertheless, the scene was inexpressibly forlorn and melancholy. There was an air of utter solitude and dreariness about it which we have never seen equalled, and which oppressed us with a nameless sadness. There was no colour in the landscape,—no cheerful green, or warm brown, or shining gold, such as relieves even the most sterile moorland scenery in this country. Everything was grey and cold—the building was grey, the rocks were grey, the lake was grey, the vegetation was grey, the sky was grey ; and, when the evening glow vanished, the lofty peaks around assumed a livid ghastly hue, which even the sparkling of their snowy drapery in the first beams of the moon could not enliven. Not a tree, not a shrub, not even a heather bush, was in sight. It seemed as if Nature, in this remote and elevated region, were dead, and that we were gazing upon its shrouded corpse in a chamber draped with the garments of woe. It was a solemn, awe-inspiring sight !

The Monastery itself is a remarkably plain building, destitute of all architectural pretensions. It is in fact a huge barn, built entirely for use and not for elegance. It consists of two parts—one fitted up as a chapel, and the other containing the cells of the monks, and rooms for the accommodation of travellers, divided from each other by white-washed wooden partitions. It is built in the strongest manner,—the walls being very thick, and the windows numerous, small, and doubly-glazed, so as most effectually to withstand the fearful storms of winter. There is a small separate building on the other side of the path, called the *Hotel de St Louis*, which is used as a granary, and as a sleeping-place for beggars and tramps. It also provides a refuge in the case of fire, from which the Hospice has frequently suffered severely, being on two occasions nearly burnt to the ground. Ladies were formerly entertained in this building, as it was deemed out of place to bring them into the Monastery. But these scruples have now been overcome, and ladies are freely admitted to all parts of the place, and allowed to sleep in the ordinary rooms. The monks of the present day have not the same dread of the fair sex which their patron saint is said to have cherished. Indeed, the good fathers are particularly delicate and profuse in their attentions to ladies, giving to them the best places at table, and serving them with the choicest viands. In fact, the company of ladies is one of the best letters of introduction that a party can bring with them ; for though the monks are proverbially kind and attentive to all persons without distinction, and especially considerate, from a sympathetic feeling, towards bachelors, yet if they have a warmer place than another in their hearts it is reserved for lady-travellers ; and who would blame them for it !

The St Bernard Hospice is the highest permanent habitation in Europe, being 8,200 feet above the level of the sea, or nearly twice the height of Ben Nevis. There are, indeed, several chalets in the Alps that are still higher, but they are tenanted only during the three summer months, when the people employ themselves in tending goats and manufacturing cheeses from their milk. About the end of September they are deserted, and the shepherds descend to the valleys. The severity of the climate at the Hospice is so great, that the snow never leaves the level ground for nine months in the year. Snow showers are almost always falling, even in the mildest weather; and there are scarcely three successive days in the whole twelve months free from blinding mists and biting sleet. The mean temperature is 30° Fahr., exactly that of the South Cape of Spitzbergen. In summer it never exceeds 48°, even on the hottest day; and in winter, particularly in February, the thermometer not unfrequently falls 40° below zero,—a degree of cold of which we in this country can form no conception. What greatly increases the severity of the climate, is the fact that the Hospice is situated in a gorge pierced nearly from north-east to south-west in the general direction of the Alps, and consequently in the course of the prevailing winds; so that, even in the height of July, the least breath of the *bise*, or north wind, sweeping over the lofty snow region always brings with it a degree of cold extremely uncomfortable. The effect of this bitter Arctic climate upon the monks, as might be expected, is extremely disastrous. The strongest constitution soon gives way under it. Headaches, pains in the chest and liver, are sadly common. Even the dogs themselves, hardy though they are, soon become rheumatic and die. Seven years is the longest span of their life, and the breed is with the utmost difficulty kept up. All the monks are young men, none of them having the grey hair, and long venerable beard, and feeble stooping gait, which are usually associated with the monastic fraternity. In fact, the intensity of the climate prevents any one from reaching old age. The prior, M. Joseph de l'Eglise, has been longer in the convent than any other monk, having spent there considerably more than the half of his life. But though only forty-six years of age, he looked a withered, pinched old man, suffering constantly and acutely from the disorders of the place, yet bearing his illnesses in patient uncomplaining silence, and going about his work as though nothing were the matter with him. The monks begin their noviciate, which usually lasts about fourteen years, at the age of eighteen; but few of them live to complete it. The first year of residence is the least trying, as the stock of health and energy they have brought with them enables them suc-



cessfully to resist the devitalizing influence of the monotonous life and the severe climate; but every succeeding year they become less and less able to bear the cold and privations, and they go about the convent the ghosts of their former selves, blue and thin and shivering. Before they have succumbed, they go down to the sick establishments in the milder climate of Martigny or Aosta, or they serve as parish priests in the different valleys around. But, in many cases, this remedy comes too late. They perish at their posts, literally starved to death. The annals of the convent contain many sad records of such devotion; and they thrill the heart with sympathy and admiration.

We mounted the stair in front of the door of the Hospice, and entered, preceded by our guide. In the wall of the vestibule we noticed a large black marble tablet, bearing the following inscription in gilt letters: "Napoleoni I. Francorum Imperatori semper augusto Reipublicæ Valesianæ restauratori semper optimo, Ægyptiaco, bis Italico, semper invicto, in monte Jovis et Sempronii semper memorando respublica Valesiæ grata, 2 Dec. 1804." At the top of a short flight of steps, our guide rang a large bell twice, and immediately a door opened, and a polite and gentlemanly monk appeared, dressed in a long black coat with white facings, and with a high dark cap, similarly decorated, upon his head. He welcomed us with much politeness, and, beckoning us to follow him, conducted us through a long vaulted corridor, dimly lighted by a solitary lamp, where the clang of an iron gate shutting behind us, and the sound of our own footsteps on the stone floor, produced a hollow reverberation. He brought us into a narrow room, with one deeply recessed window at the end, containing three beds simply draped with dark crimson curtains, and all the materials for a comfortable toilet. There are about eighty beds for travellers of better condition in the monastery, and accommodation for between two and three hundred persons of all classes at one time. Speedily removing our travel-stains, we rejoined our host in the corridor, who shewed us into the general reception room, where we found lights and a smouldering wood fire upon the hearth. The walls of the room, lined with pine wainscot, were hung with engravings and paintings, the gifts of grateful travellers; while in one corner was a piano, presented by the Prince of Wales shortly after his visit to the Hospice. Two long tables occupied the sides, covered with French newspapers and periodicals, among which we noticed several recent numbers of *Galignani* and the *Illustrated London News*. We went instinctively at once to the fire, but found it monopolised by a party of Italians and Germans, who

shewed no disposition to admit us within the magic circle. We elbowed our way in, however, and had the satisfaction of crouching over the singing logs with the rest, and admiring the beautifully carved marble mantelpiece. One of the monks very considerably came in with an armful of wood and a pair of bellows, and, replenishing the fire, speedily produced a cheerful blaze, which thawed us all into good humour and genial chattiness. We felt the cold exceedingly; the thermometer in one of the windows of the room registering six degrees below the freezing point. At Martigny, in the morning, the thermometer indicated about eighty degrees in the shade; so that in less than twelve hours we had passed from a tropical heat sufficient to blister the skin exposed to it, to an arctic cold capable of benumbing it with frost-bites. The rooms of the convent are heated all the year round, and at what an expense and trouble it may be judged, when the fact is mentioned, that every particle of the fuel consumed is brought on the backs of mules over the Col de Fenetre, a continuous ascent of nine thousand feet, from the convent forest in the valley of Ferret, twelve miles distant. Water, too, boils at this elevation at about 187° Fahr, or twenty-five degrees sooner than the normal point; and in consequence of this it takes *five* hours to cook a piece of meat, which would have taken only three hours to get ready down in the valleys, and a most inordinate quantity of fuel is consumed in the kitchen during the process. The most essential element of life in that terrible climate is yet, sad to say, too rare and precious to be used in sufficient quantity. What would not the poor monks give for a roaring, blazing coal fire, such as cheers in almost limitless measure our homes on the winter nights, when they sit shivering over the dim glimmer of a wood fire carefully doled out in ounces!

Having arrived too late for supper, which is usually served at six, the dinner hour being at noon, an impromptu meal was provided for us and the other travellers who were in the same position. Though hastily got up, the cooking of it would have done credit to the best hotel in Martigny. It consisted of excellent soup, roast chamois, and boiled rice and milk, with prunes. A bottle of very superior red wine, which was said to be a present from the King of Sardinia, was put beside each person; and a small dessert of nuts and dried fruits wound up the entertainment. The Clavandier presided, and by his courteous manners made every one feel perfectly at home. The conversation was carried on exclusively in French, which is the only language spoken by the fathers. Coming in contact during the summer months with travellers from all parts of the world, and devoting the long winter to hard study, in which they are helped by the superior, who is a man of great learning, the

monks are exceedingly intelligent, and well acquainted with the leading events of the day, in which they take a deep interest. Some of them are proficient in music; others display a taste for natural history; and they all combine various accomplishments with their special study of theology and the patristic literature. They are also very liberal in their views, having none of the bigotry and intolerance which we usually associate with the monastic order, and which is so conspicuous in the cures of the papal Swiss cantons. A striking example of this was related to us at the time. A week before our arrival, an Episcopalian clergyman, happening to be staying with a party of Englishmen in the Hospice on a Sunday, asked permission of the superior to conduct a religious service with his countrymen in the refectory. This was not only granted with the utmost cordiality, but the chapel itself was offered to him for the purpose, which offer, however, he declined in the same spirit in which it was made, unwilling to trespass to that extent upon their catholicity. Conversing pleasantly on various subjects with our host and the guests around, we did ample justice to the good cheer. Fridays and Saturdays, we understood, were fast days; but though the brethren fasted, no restriction was put during those days upon the diet of travellers—the table being always simply but amply furnished. The task of purveying for the Hospice, which falls to the Clavandier, is by no means an easy one, when it is considered that upwards of sixteen thousand travellers, with appetites greatly sharpened by the keen air, are entertained every year; and not a single scrap of anything that can be eaten grows on the St Bernard itself. All the provisions, which must consist of articles that will keep, are brought from Aosta, and stored in the magazines of the convent. During the months of June, July, and August, when the paths are open, about twenty horses and mules are employed every day in carrying in food and fuel for the long winter. The country people also bring up gifts of cheese, butter, and potatoes, in gratitude for the kind services of the monks. Several cows are kept in the convent pastures on the Italian side, and their milk affords a grateful addition to the food of the monks. During winter they have no fresh meat at all, being obliged to subsist upon salt beef and mutton, usually killed and preserved in September; and what is still worse, they have no vegetables; all attempts at gardening in the place having proved abortive, so that not unfrequently scurvy is added to their sufferings. After an hour or two's chat around the fire, and a very cursory but most interesting inspection of the pile of visitors' books, which contain many celebrated names, and a great deal that is curious and admirable in the way of comment upon the place, our host bade us all good-night, and we too were very glad to

retire. A bright moon shone in through the curtainless window of our bedroom, and lay in bars on the bare floor. Outside, the view was most romantic, the moonshine investing everything, snowy peaks, jagged rocks, and the bare terraces around, with lights and shadows of the strangest kind. A pale blue sky, spiritual almost in its purity and transparency, in which the stars glimmered with a cold clear splendour, bent over the wild spot; and the loneliness and silence were unlike in their depth and utterness anything we had ever before experienced. Snatching, like Gray's schoolboy, a few minutes of fearful joy from the contemplation of the weird scene, worn-out nature summoned us to bed. There was a perfect pile of blankets and a heavy down quilt above us, under which we lay squeezed like a cheese in a cheese-press, but we utterly failed to get warm. Sleep would not be wooed. We lay and watched the shadows on the floor, and thought of many unutterable things, and wondered at the strange vicissitudes of life which so often place us unexpectedly in situations that were the ideals of our youth. About five o'clock in the morning, just as the grey dawn was stealing in, we were thoroughly roused from a dozing, semi-torpid state, into which we had sunk, by the ringing of the convent-bell for matins; and shortly afterwards the rich tones of an organ, mellowed by the distance, pealed from the chapel with an indescribably romantic effect. We arose and dressed with chattering teeth, and then went out into the raw air. We walked beside the small, desolate-looking lake beside the Hospice, where never fish leaped up, and on which no boat has ever sailed. Being the highest sheet of water in Europe, fed by the melting of the snows, it is frequently frozen all the summer; and when thawed, it lies "like a spot of ink amid the snow." Passing a pillar at the end of the lake, and a curious heraldic stone beside a spring, we had crossed the boundary between Switzerland and Piedmont, and were now in Italy. Climbing up the bare rocks, to a kind of esplanade, near a tall cross inserted in a massive pedestal of chlorite-schist, and bearing the inscription, "Deo Optimo Maximo," which guides the traveller from the Italian side of the pass to the convent, we sat down and surveyed the scene. The snowy dome of Mont Velan filled up the western horizon. On our left, the gorge was shut in by the rugged range of Mont Mort, Mont Chenaletta, and the Pic de Dronaz. Below us, we could see through the writhing mist, glimpses of the green corrie, called "La Vacherie," where the cattle of the Hospice grazed under the care of a few peasants, whose wretched chalets were the only habitations; while beyond, to the southward, rose up a strange Sinai-like group of reddish serrated rocks, entirely destitute of vegetation, with wreaths of dark cloud floating

across their faces, or clinging to their ledges, and greatly increasing their savage gloom. An air of utter desolation and loneliness pervaded the whole scene. No sounds broke the stillness, save such as were wonderfully congenial with the spirit of the place, the sighing of the wind as it ruffled the surface of the lake, the occasional tinkle of the cow bells far below, the deep baying of the St Bernard dogs, or the murmur of a torrent far off that came faint and continuous as music heard in ocean shells. We had ample evidence around—if our dripping nose and icy hands did not convince us—of the extreme severity of the climate. The vegetation was exclusively hyperborean, exactly similar in type to that which flourishes around the grim shores of Baffin's Bay. We had gathered the same species on the summits of the highest Scottish mountains, and afterwards on the Dovrefield in Norway. The reindeer moss of Lapland whitened the ground here and there, interspersed with a sulphur-coloured lichen which grows sparingly on the tops of the Cairngorum range. Large patches of black Tripe de Roche—the lichen which Sir John Franklin and his party in the Polar regions were once, in the absence of all other food, compelled to eat, along with the remains of their old shoes and leather belts—clung to the stones, looking like fragments of charred parchment; while an immense quantity of other well-known Arctic lichens and mosses covered the level surface of each exposed rock, as with a crisp shaggy mantle, that crunched under the foot. There were no tufts of grass, no green thing whatever. Tiny grey saxifrages, covered with white flowers, grew in thick clumps, as if crowding together for warmth, along with brilliant little patches of gentian, whose depth and tenderness of blue were indescribable, and tufts of *Aretias* and *Silenes*, starred with a profusion of the most exquisite rosy flowers, as though the crimson glow of sunset had settled permanently upon them. The Alpine Forget-me-not, only found in this country on the summits of the Breadalbane mountains, cheered us with its bright blue eyes everywhere; while the "Alpine lady's mantle" spread its grey satiny leaves, along with the Arctic willow, the favourite food of the chamois, over the stony knolls, as if in pity for their nakedness. We found a few specimens of the beautiful lilac *Soldanella alpina*, and also several tufts of the glacier *Ranunculus*, on a kind of moraine at the foot of a hardened snow-wreath. The *Ranunculus* was higher up, and grew on the loose debris, without a particle of verdure around it. It seemed like the last effort of expiring nature to fringe the limit of eternal snow with life. Its foliage and flowers had a peculiarly wan and woe-begone look. Its appeal was so sorrowful, as it looked up at us, with its bleached colourless petals, faintly

tinged with a hectic flush, that we could not help sympathising with it, as though it were a sensitive creature. But the flower that touched us most, was our own beloved "Scottish blue-bell." We were surprised and delighted beyond measure to see it hanging its rich peal of bells in myriads from the crevices of the rocks around, swaying with every breeze. It tolled in fairy tones the music of "Home, sweet home." It was like meeting a friend in a far country. It was the old familiar blue-bell, but it was changed in some respects. Its blossom was far larger, and of a deep purple tinge, instead of the clear pale blue colour which it has in this country. It afforded a striking example of the changes which the same plant undergoes when placed in different circumstances. We could see in its altered features modifications to suit a higher altitude and a severer climate. In the Alps, all the plants have blossoms remarkably large in proportion to their foliage, and their colours are unusually intensified, in order that they may get all the advantage of the brief but ardent sunshine, so as to ripen their seed as rapidly as possible. And this unprincipled little blue-bell in the vicinity of the monastery, had exchanged the clear blue of the Scottish Covenanter, for the purple and fine linen of the Romish hierarchy, and was just like many others, animals as well as plants, doing in Rome as they do in Rome! In this desolate, nature-forsaken spot, where an eternal winter reigns, the presence of these beautiful alpine flowers, doing their best to make the place cheery, brought a peculiar indescribable feeling of spring to our heart, reminded us irresistibly of the season which is so sad amid all its beauty and promise—the first trembling out of the dark—the first thrill of life that comes to the waiting earth—and then the first timid peering forth of green on hedge and bank; and like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," we said—

"Oh! happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare;  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware."

It is impossible to gaze on the St Bernard pass without feelings of the deepest interest. It stands as a link in the chain that connects ancient and modern history—departed dynasties and systems of religion with modern governments and fresh creeds; and in this part the continuity has never been broken. Bare and bleak as is the spot, it is a palimpsest crowded with relics of different epochs and civilisations, the one covering but not obliterating the other. Every step you take you set your foot upon "some reverend history." Thought, like the electric spark, rapidly traverses the thousand historical

links of the chain of memory. You feel as if in the crowded valley in the vision of Mirza. All the nations of the earth—Druids, Celts, Romans, Saracens, French, Italians—seem to pass in solemn file, a dim and ghostly band, before your fancy's eye. Names that have left an imperishable wake behind them—Cæsar, Charlemagne, Canute, Francis I., Napoleon Bonaparte—have traversed that pass. Europe, Africa, and Asia have poured their wild hordes through that narrow defile. The spot on which the convent is erected was held sacred and oracular from time immemorial. Like the Tarpeian rock and the site of ancient Rome, like the stern solitudes of Sinai and Horeb, it had a *religio loci* and a consecrated shrine from the remotest antiquity. The weird, wild aspect of the place gave it an air of terror, and naturally associated it with the presence of some mysterious supernatural being. On a little piece of level ground near the lake, called the *Place de Jupiter*, on which the ruinous foundations of an ancient Roman temple may still be seen, a rude altar, built of rough blocks of stone, was erected three thousand years ago, and sacrifices offered on it to *Pen* the god of the mountains, from whom the whole central chain of Switzerland received the name of Pennine Alps. The custom of building cairns on the highest points of our own hills, is supposed to have been derived from the worship of this divinity, which seems at one time to have spread over the whole of Europe. The names of many of the Highland mountains bear significant traces of it. Ben Nevis means "Hill of heaven"; and Ben Ledi signifies "Hill of God," having near the summit some large upright stones, which in all probability formed a shrine of the god *Pen*, whose Gaelic equivalent, as *Beinn* or *Ben*, has been bestowed on every conspicuous summit. Who the primitive people were that first erected the rude altars on the St Bernard pass to their tutelary deity, we know not. They may have been allied to those strange Lacustrines who studded the lakes of Switzerland and Italy with their groups of dwellings, at the time that Abraham was journeying to Canaan, and whose relics, recently discovered, are exciting so much interest among archæologists. They were no doubt Celtic tribes; but as Niebuhr says, "the narrow limits of history embrace only the period of their decline as a nation." The few fragments that are left of their language, like the waves of the ancient ocean, have a mysterious murmur of their own, which we can never clearly understand.

For hundreds of years this unknown people worshipped their god, and held possession of their territories undisturbed; but the day came when they were compelled to yield to a foreign invader, who fabricated his weapons of iron, and wielded them with a stronger arm. Rome had established a universal supre-

macy, and sent its conquering legions over the whole of Europe. The stupendous barrier of the Alps offered no obstruction. Through its passes and valleys, led on by Cæsar Augustus in person, they poured like an irresistible torrent, washing away all traces of the former peoples. They demolished the old Druidic altar on the summit of the St Bernard, and erected on its site a temple dedicated to Jupiter Penninus, while the whole range was called Mons Jovis, a name under the corrupt form of *Mont Joux*, which it retained until comparatively recent times. After this the pass became one of the principal highways from Rome to the rich and fertile territories beyond the Alps. A substantial Roman road, well paved, was constructed with infinite pains and skill over the mountain, the remains of which may still be seen near the plain of Jupiter. It was used for centuries; and Roman consul and private soldier alike paused at the simple shrine of Jupiter Penninus, and left their offerings there, in gratitude for the protection afforded them. A large number of Roman coins, bronze medals, and fragments of votive brass tablets have been found on this spot, and are now deposited in the small museum of the convent adjoining the refectory. In the fifth century the barbarian hordes of Goths under Alaric, of Huns under Attila, and of Vandals under Genseric, swept over the pass to subdue Italy and take possession of Rome. From that time no event of importance, with the exception of the passage of the Lombards in 547, occurred in connection with this spot, until Bernhard, who is supposed by some to have given his name to the pass, uncle of Charlemagne, marched a large army over it in 773, in his famous expedition against Astolphus, the last Lombard sovereign but one. Charlemagne himself afterwards recrossed it at the head of his victorious troops, after conquering Didier, the last sovereign of Upper Italy. Then came Bernard de Menton in the year 962, and, abolishing the last remains of pagan worship, founded the Hospice which has received his name, and erected the first Christian altar. After this period, as Mr King informs us, the Saracens ravaged the convent, and destroyed its records by fire, and were in turn attacked and repulsed by the Normans. Humbert "the white-handed," led over the pass an army in 1034, to join Conrad in the conquest of Burgundy; and a part of the army of Frederic Barbarossa crossed in 1166, under the command of Berthold de Zähringen. "Pilgrims bound to Rome frequented it, travelling in large caravans for mutual protection from the brigands who infested it after the Saracen invasion; and we find our own King Canute, himself a pilgrim to the tomb of St Peter's, by his representations to the Pope and the Emperor Adolphus on behalf of his English pilgrim subjects, obtaining



the extirpation of those lawless bands, and the free and safe use of the pass." The present building was erected about the year 1680, its predecessor having been burnt to the ground. It is impossible to enumerate within our narrow limits all the remarkable historical events which are connected with this place, from the February of the year 59, when Cæcina, the Roman general, marched over it with the cohorts recalled from Britain, through a snow storm in February, to the spring of the year 1800, when Napoleon crossed it with an army of 80,000 men and 58 field-pieces on his way to the famous battle field of Marengo. There are few spots in the world that have witnessed so many changes and revolutions—few spots which have been trodden by so many human feet; and we do not envy the man who can gaze upon the narrow path that skirts the lake from the Hospice calm and unmoved, when he thinks of the myriads of his fellow creatures, from the greatest names in all history, down to the lowest and most obscure, who, age after age, have disturbed the stern silence of these rocks, and who have now all alike gone down into undistinguishable dust. Methinks the history of this little footpath is a commentary upon the nothingness of human pride, more impressive than all that poetry has ever sung or philosophy taught!

A little way beyond the Hospice, on a slightly rising ground, is a low building of one storey, built in the rudest manner, and with the roughest materials. It is covered with a grey-slated roof; and in the wall of the gable which fronts you, there is a narrow iron grating, through which the light shines into the interior. You look in, and never till your dying day will you forget the ghastly spectacle that then meets your eye. It haunted us like a dreadful nightmare long afterwards. This is the famous Morgue, or dead-house, of which all the world has heard, and which every one visiting the convent, whose nerves are sufficiently strong, makes a special point of seeing. We could almost have wished, however, that our curiosity had been less keen; for it is not pleasant to hang up in the gallery of one's memory a picture like that. And yet it does one good to see it. It softens the heart with pity; it conveys, in a more solemn form than we are accustomed to read it, the lesson of mortality; and it gives us a better idea than we could otherwise have formed of the dangers and sufferings which have often to be encountered in the winter passage of these mountains, and the noble work which the monks of St Bernard perform. It was indeed a Golgotha, forcibly reminding us of Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones. Skulls, ribs, vertebrae, and other fragments of humanity, with the flesh long ago wasted away from them, blanched by sun and frost, lay here and there in heaps on the floor. As our eye got accus-

tomed to the obscurity of the place, we noticed beyond this mass of miscellaneous bones, separated by a low wall which did not obstruct the view, an extraordinary group of figures. These were the bodies found entire of those who had perished in the winters' snow storms. Some were lying prostrate, others were leaning against the rough wall, the dim, uncertain light imparting to their faces a strange and awful expression of life. Three figures especially attracted and rivetted our attention. In the right-hand corner there was a tall spectre fixed in an upright attitude, with its skeleton arms outstretched, as if supplicating for the aid that never came, and its eyeless sockets glaring with a fearful expression of mortal terror and agony. For years it had stood thus without any perceptible change. In another corner there was a figure kneeling upon the floor, muffled in a thick dark cloak, with a blue worsted cuff on the left wrist. No statue of the Laocoon ever told its tale of suffering more eloquently than did that shrivelled corpse. He was an honest and industrious workman, a native of Martigny. He set out early one December morning from that town, intending to go over into Italy in search of employment. He got safely and comfortably as far as the Cantine de Proz, where he halted all night. Next morning he set out through the defile leading up to the Hospice. The weather was at first favourable, but he had not proceeded far when dark clouds speedily covered the sky from end to end, and the fearful *guxen*, which always rages most violently in the Alpine passes, broke out in all its fury. He had doubtless fought against it with all his energy, but in vain. He was found, not three hundred yards from the convent door, buried among the deep snow, frozen in the attitude in which he still appeared, with his knees bent, and his head thrown back in hopeless exhaustion and despair. But the saddest of all the sad sights of the Morgue is the corpse of a woman lying huddled up at the foot of the last-mentioned figure, dressed in dark rags. In her arms she holds a bundle, which you are told is a baby; and her withered face bends over it with a fond expression which death and decay have not been able to obliterate. The light shines full on her quiet features, which are no more ruffled by earthly pain. You cannot fail to see that she had made every effort to preserve the life of the baby to the last moment, for most of her own scanty clothing is drawn up and wrapt round its tiny form, leaving her own limbs exposed to the blast. Oh! sacred mystery of mother's love, stronger than pain, more enduring than death! But, alas! in vain was its self-sacrificing tenderness here. The weary feet could no longer bear the precious burden over the wild; and sinking in the

the fatal sleep, the snow drifted over them, fold by fold, silent and swift, and the place that knew them once knew them no more for ever: the wind passed over it, and it was gone. They found the hapless pair in the following spring, when the snows had melted away; and they bore them tenderly and sadly to this last resting-place. No one came to claim them. Where the poor woman came from, what was her name, no one ever knew; and in this heart-touching pathos of mystery and death, she awaits the coming of that other and brighter spring that shall melt even the chill of the tomb.

It is indeed a strange place that morgue! All its ghastly tenants perished in the same dreadful way,—the victims of the storm-fiend. Side by side they repose, so cold, so lonely, so forsaken; with no earth to cover them; no token of love from those who were nearest and dearest; no flower to bloom over their dust; not even one green blade of grass to draw down the sunshine and the dew of heaven to their dark charnel-house. Traveller after traveller from the ends of the earth comes and looks in with shuddering dread through the grating on the pitiable sight, and then goes away, perhaps a sadder and a wiser man. For our own part we could not resist the tender impulse, which moved us to gather a small nosegay of gentians and blue-bells, and throw it in, as an offering of pity to the poor, deserted, and forgotten dead. It is impossible to dig a grave in this spot, for the hard rock comes everywhere to the surface, and but the thinnest sprinkling of mould rests upon it, hardly sufficient to maintain the scanty vegetation. This sterile region refuses even a grave to those who die there! So cold and dry is the air, that the corpses in the morgue do not decompose in the same way that they do at lower elevations. They wither and collapse into mummies, embalmed by the air, like the dried bodies preserved in the catacombs of Palermo,—and for years they undergo no change,—at last falling to pieces, and strewing the ground with their fragments. Within the last twelve years, no less than sixteen persons have perished in the snow. Some five or six years ago, two of the monks went out with a couple of servants to search for a man who was supposed to have lost himself in the mountains. They were scarcely fifty paces away from the Hospice, when an immense avalanche fell from the side of Mont Chenaletta, and buried the whole party under eighteen feet of snow. The dreadful catastrophe was seen from the convent door, but the monks were utterly powerless to render help. When rescued, the party were all dead. The number of accidents on the St Bernard

pass has greatly diminished of late years; and now the services of the monks in winter are principally required to nurse poor travellers exhausted by the difficulties of the ascent, or who have been frost-bitten. Returning from our morning walk, we saw the famous *marons*, or St Bernard dogs, playing about the convent door. There were five of them, massively built creatures, of a brown colour,—very like Newfoundland dogs, only larger and more powerful. The stock is supposed to have come originally from the Pyrenees. The services they have rendered in rescuing travellers are incalculable. A whole book might easily be filled with interesting adventures of which they were the heroes. In the Museum at Berne, we saw the stuffed body of the well-known dog, “Barry,” which is said to have saved the lives of no less than forty persons. The huge creatures were fond of being caressed; and one of them ran after our companion, as he was going up the hill-side by a wrong path, and pulled him back by the coat-tail!

After a substantial breakfast, we paid a visit to the chapel to deposit our alms in the alms-box, for though the monks make no charge for their hospitality, or even give the least hint of a donation, there is a box placed in the chapel for the benefit of the poor, and to this fund every traveller should contribute, at the very least, what the same accommodation would have cost him at an hotel. It is to be feared, however, that the great majority contribute nothing at all. Not one of the company who supped and breakfasted with us approached the chapel, having skulked away as soon as they could decently take leave; and yet they were bedizened with gold chains and jewellery of a costly description. There was one Scotchman present who carried out his sound protestant principles at the expense of the poor monks. He was a very thin, wiry man, but he ate an enormous supper and breakfast. He drank a bottle of wine at each meal, and helped himself most largely to everything on the table. He took what would have sufficed for four ordinary men, and, to our intense disgust, he rubbed down his stomach complacently in the morning ere departing, and said, in the hearing of all, that “he had made up his mind to put nothing in the alms-box, lest he should countenance popery!” The expenses of the establishment are very heavy, while the funds to meet them have been decreasing. Formerly the convent was the richest in Europe, possessing no less than eighty benefices. But Charles Emanuel III. of Sardinia, falling into a dispute with the Cantons of Switzerland about the nomination of a provost, sequestrated the possessions of the monks, leaving

them only a small estate in the Valais and in the Canton de Vaud. The French and Italian governments give an annual subsidy of a thousand pounds, while another thousand is raised by the gifts of travellers, and by collections made in Switzerland,—Protestants contributing as freely as Roman Catholics. Notwithstanding their comparative poverty, however, the monks are still as lavish and hospitable as ever, up to their utmost means. We ourselves were witnesses to a scene of profuse hospitality, which reminded us of the descriptions given of the bounty of abbeys in the middle ages. As it was the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, crowds of beggars and tramps from the neighbouring valleys,—masses of human degradation and deformity of the most disgusting character,—were congregated about the kitchen door, clamorous for alms, while the monks were busy serving them with bread, cold meat, and wine. What they could not eat they carried away in baskets which they had brought for the purpose. Entering the chapel with our little offering, we were greatly struck with its magnificence, as contrasted with the excessive plainness of the outside, and the sterility of the spot. It is considered a very sacred place, for it contains the relics of no less than three famous saints, viz., St Bernard, St Hyrenæus, and St Maurice, of the celebrated Theban legion of Christians. Five massive gilt altars stood in various parts of the chapel, while the walls were adorned with frescoes and several fine paintings and statues. The marble tomb of Desaix, representing him in relief, wounded and sinking from his horse into the arms of his aid, Le Brun, was a conspicuous object. "I will give you the Alps for your monument," said Napoleon, with tears in his eyes, to his dying friend; "you shall rest on their loftiest inhabited point." The body of the general was carefully embalmed at Milan, and afterwards conveyed to the chapel, where it now reposes. A crowd of peasants, men and women, were kneeling, during our visit, in the body of the church, performing their devotions; while three or four monks, dressed in splendid habiliments of crimson and gold, were chanting the solemn melodies of a Gregorian mass, accompanied by the rich tones of a magnificent organ, and clouds of fragrant incense rose slowly to the roof.

Anxious to see the geographical bearings of the convent, we climbed up, with immense expenditure of breath and perspiration, a lofty precipitous peak close at hand. We had a most glorious view from the top, for the atmosphere was perfectly clear, and the remotest distances plainly visible. In front was "le Mont Blanc," as the inhabitants proudly call it, and at this

distance of fifteen miles in a straight line, it looked infinitely higher and grander than when seen from the nearer and more commonly visited points of view at Chamouni. Far up, miles seemingly, in the deep blue sky, rose the dazzling whiteness of its summit, completely dwarfing all the other peaks around it. On our left was the enormously vast group of Monte Rosa, its everlasting snows tinged with the most delicate crimson hues of the rising sun; while between them the stupendous obelisk of the Matterhorn, by far the sharpest and sublimest of the peaks of Europe, stormed the sky, with a long grey cloud flying at its summit like a flag of defiance. Around these three giant mountains, crowded a bewildering host of other summits, most of them above 13,000 feet high, with enormous glaciers streaming down their sides, and forming the sources of nearly all the great rivers of the continent. Our eye and soul turned away from this awful white realm of death, with relief, to the brown and green mountains of Italy, which just peered timidly, as it were, above that fearful horizon in the far south, with an indescribably soft, warm sky brooding over them, as if in sympathy. That little strip of mellow sky and naturally-coloured earth, was the only bond in all the wide view that united us to the cosy, lowly world of our fellow-creatures. Hurriedly descending, with many a picturesque tumble and glissade, which did not improve the continuity of our clothing, we reached the foot of the hill in safety. Shortly afterwards we bade adieu to our hospitable entertainers with mingled feelings of gratification and regret; gratification, because we had seen so much that was new and interesting to us, and had been so kindly treated, though strangers in a strange land; and regret, because the palmiest days of the Hospice are over, for the railway tunnel through Mont Cenis, which will soon be completed, will whirl away travellers direct into Italy, and few will care to turn aside, on a long and somewhat difficult journey, to visit the spot.

It is commonly said that we may learn some of the most useful lessons from our enemies. And certainly there is one lesson which, above all others, we may learn from a visit to the Hospice of St Bernard, and that is the lesson of beneficence, of doing good to all as we have opportunity. Whatever his creed, whatever his prejudices against the Roman Catholic religion, and against priests and monks in general, we do not believe that a single traveller ever quitted the hospitable roof of this fraternity without feelings of the highest respect for them. We yield to none in our detestation of the false faith which invented the tortures of the inquisition and lighted the martyr-fires of Smithfield, and whose blighting effects, on soul, and mind, and body, we have seen so frequently illustrated at home and abroad. We yield to none in our desire to see the

dominion of pope and priest for ever abolished, and the pure and glorious doctrines of the gospel preached everywhere instead of the soul-ruining dogmas of the Church of Rome. But still we cannot repress the admiration we feel for men like the monks of St Bernard, who, doubtless, with mistaken notions of self-salvation by works, but yet with pure and unselfish motives, carry out unweariedly the great precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and thus put many of us Protestants to shame,—whose Christianity consists more in preaching and speaking than in practice. These young men, amid the monotony of a life crushed and deprived of all colour and fragrance, amid the fearful cold and privations of a polar climate, amid toils and dangers which would appal the heart of the stoutest of us, quietly and humbly, without any Pharisaical outcry, do, year after year, the work of the good Samaritan, without respect of persons or creeds, until at last a horrible death strikes them down one by one. Oh! is there one charitable soul who doubts that the righteous Judge on the great day of reckoning, will say to some at least of these noble monks, as he will say to all who have given a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of a disciple, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!"

H. M.

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ART. V.—*Young's Life and Light of Men.*

*The Life and Light of Men.* An Essay. By JOHN YOUNG, LL.D. (Edin.)  
Alexander Strahan, Publisher, London and New York. 1866.

**A**LTHOUGH this work is a determined and thorough-going attack upon what are usually regarded as Evangelical principles, it is deserving, on several accounts, of careful and respectful treatment from evangelical reviewers; and as far as in us lies, it shall receive such treatment from us. The proved ability and religious earnestness of Dr Young, the service he has rendered to the cause of Christianity by his singularly striking and beautiful treatment of an important branch of the Evidences that has not yet been so much cultivated as it ought, and the influence which these powers and services are fitted to give to any views he puts forth, forbid this work to be handled without respect. The impression produced by his "Christ of History" is too fresh on our minds, and too thoroughly in his favour, to permit us to approach any work of his without being at the outset

favourably disposed, and expecting to meet in its pages much that is not only fresh and striking, but true, good, and seasonable. The work commands our respect also because it is the expression of honest opinion, by a man who has had the courage to make no small sacrifice for his opinions. Dr Young has been faithful enough to the claims of truth to give up his connection with the church to which he belonged, when he found that he could no longer believe its creed. This work is dedicated to the Moderator, Ministers, and Elders of the United Presbyterian Church; and is, in fact, a sort of manifesto addressed to his former fellow office-bearers, explaining and recommending the views he has been led to adopt. A man who has had the honesty and courage to make so painful a sacrifice out of regard to his convictions of truth, has put himself in such a position that what he has to say against the doctrines he has abandoned is entitled to be heard with great attention and respect; and we have much more satisfaction in dealing with such a one than with those who have persuaded themselves that they may entertain and propagate opinions that are diametrically opposed to the creed they profess. However much we regret the course that Dr Young has felt himself called to take for its own sake, we rejoice at it in so far as it has given a practical proof that, in the Presbyterian Churches at least, public creeds are a reality and not a mere empty form; and this all the more because, in this case, the Church's Confession has led to his separation of his own accord, and not by a process of ecclesiastical discipline.

But while we thus sincerely express our sense of what is due to this work, we must also frankly say, that had it not been for these considerations, we should have been inclined to pass it by with a very slight notice indeed. We do not think it at all worthy of Dr Young; and had it appeared anonymously, we should have considered that the extremely low view here taken of the work of Christ, together with the weakness of the arguments by which it is supported, would have rendered it so little likely to do harm as to need no elaborate exposure or review; but we cannot conceal from ourselves, that not only is Dr Young's well-merited reputation fitted to give his views entrance and currency in many quarters, but that if a mind like his could be led to such conclusions by such arguments as we find in this book, there must be a large class of minds more or less open to them, and, therefore, a somewhat greater need than we should have thought of a careful discussion of their real nature. In reading the work before us, while we have been greatly disappointed and grieved at the length to which the author





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