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ORIENTAL CHRISTIANITY
EXPOSED & CONSIDERED

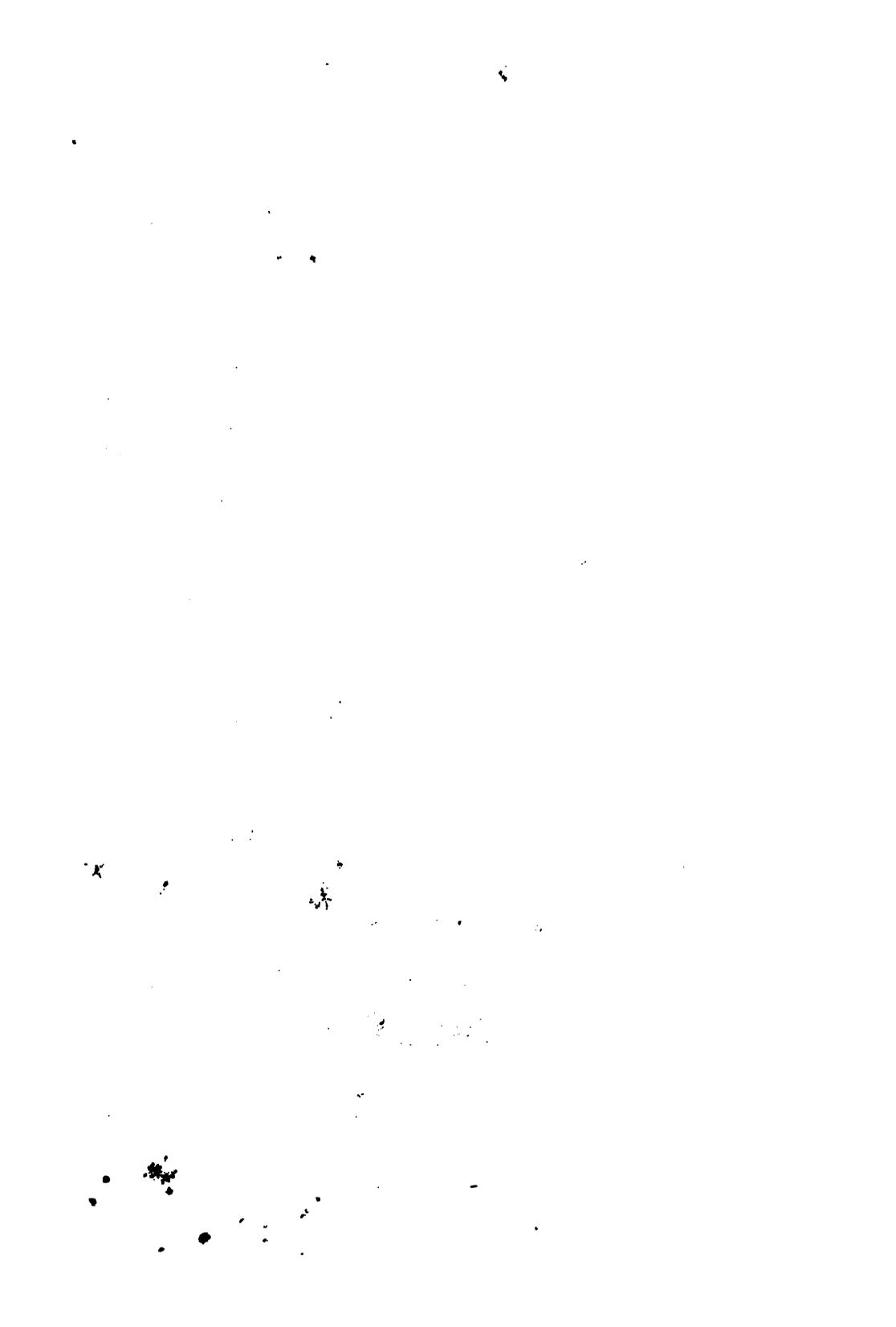
J. BROWN ESQ. Q. C.



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EASTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE WAR.

**THE IDOLATRY,
SUPERSTITION, AND CORRUPTION
OF THE
CHRISTIANS OF TURKEY,
GREECE, AND RUSSIA,**

**EXPOSED AND CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESENT WAR,
AND THE PROSPECTS OF A REFORMATION.**

BY
JOSEPH BROWN, Esq., Q.C.



**LONDON.
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS.
—
1877.**

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THE great and lasting importance of the subject of these pages, and its bearing on Ritualism and Romanizing at home, have induced the writer to attempt to exhibit the present state and prospects of Oriental Christianity, which he has strong reason to believe are unknown to general readers. Very few have ever seen the Rev. John Hartley's 'Researches in Greece' (1831), or Dean Waddington's 'Condition of the Greek Church' (1829), and both works are now scarce, and quite out of date. Dean Stanley's charming 'Lectures on the Eastern Church' (1861) are chiefly concerned with its ancient history, rather than its present condition; and important events have occurred since they were written. This brief essay is intended to put together in a short compass the leading facts and the latest information for the many who would not read a larger work. In his observations the writer has used the freedom of a layman and a lawyer, especially in exposing superstition; but he trusts, without ever forgetting the deep respect due to sincere religion.

54, AVENUE ROAD, REGENT'S PARK,
August, 1877.



EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

AND

THE WAR.

WHILE the great cause of the Cross against the Crescent is being pleaded in the East by the cannon's mouth, that "ultima ratio regum," and all Europe is watching with anxiety this tremendous trial by battle, it may be a relief to turn away for a while from scenes of carnage and cruelty, and to make some inquiries as to the sort of religion professed and practised by the Oriental Christians, for whom our sympathies have been so deeply moved that we have been strongly tempted to take their part in the conflict. What kind of Christianity do they believe and practise? Has it any resemblance to our Protestantism? Is it such a religion that we could consent to fight for? And is it even possible, as some have hoped, to bring about a union between the Church of England and the Oriental Church? Or on the contrary, does it exhibit at this day a living picture of the worst evils of priestcraft and superstition, which we escaped from at the Protestant Reformation? And what hope for its future reformation may be encouraged if the pending war should lead to the overthrow of the Turkish yoke?

These questions appear to be of deep importance at

the present time, when one party are urging us to draw the sword and plunge into the fight between Turkey and Russia; when another party in our own Church are doing their best to undo the work of the Protestant Reformation, and lead the English people back to ritual and traditional religion, auricular confession, and priestcraft; and a third party are dreaming of a union with the Greek Church. Little information is to be obtained on these religious questions from the journalists and political writers, and the author has found considerable difficulty in getting at the whole truth respecting the state of the Christian religion in the East. He has therefore determined to make public the result of his inquiries, which have ranged over many forgotten and curious volumes, and have been aided by information received from those who have long resided among the people in question. It seems to him that at the present time the English people are deeply concerned in learning the real truth, and the whole truth of this matter; and this must be his apology for bringing to light many things which a large party among us would rather conceal.

The religion of the Christians in Turkey is that of the Greek or Oriental Church, which insists on calling itself "The Holy Orthodox Church." Besides the Turkish Christians, this Church embraces three-fourths of the inhabitants of Russia, nearly all the people of Greece and the Greek islands, the great majority of the people of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Servia, and a large portion of the inhabitants of the Turkish provinces in Asia. Though usually called by us the Greek Church, that term belongs rather to its origin

and ancient history than to its present condition; for at least three-fourths of its present members are Slavonians by birth and language, including the Russians, Roumanians, and Bulgarians. The Greeks by birth form only a small minority.

The Oriental Church numbers in its communion probably not less than seventy millions of Christians—a number exceeding all the Protestant Churches together—and is further remarkably interesting as containing all that Mohammedanism has left of Christianity in those countries where it was first taught and propagated. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, of Antioch, and Alexandria claim to be the successors of the Apostles with much better right than the Bishop of Rome, and emphatically assert the title of their followers to be called the “Holy Orthodox Church.”

The facts stated in this paper apply chiefly to the state of the Christians of the Turkish provinces and the countries formerly subject to Turkey—viz., Greece, Servia, and Roumania. But the greater part of them will apply equally to the Church in Russia, except where the contrary is mentioned or implied.

The doctrines of the Greek Church approach very near to those of the Church of Rome. It acknowledges as the sources of faith both the Bible and tradition. By the latter are understood such doctrines as were taught orally by the Apostles and sanctioned by the fathers, especially Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and John of Damascus, and by the first seven Ecumenical Councils. The consequences of admitting tradition as authoritative we shall presently see. Passing

over the subtle difference about the procession of the Holy Ghost, which none but a Greek sophist would have invented, the creed of the Greek Church scarcely differs from the Roman, except in rejecting the Augustinian doctrines of grace and predestination. It admits the seven Sacraments of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confession, Penance, Ordination, Marriage, and Extreme Unction. In regard to the invocation of Saints and the Virgin Mary and the reverence or adoration of relics, crosses, and holy places, it entirely shares the views of the Latin Church. It teaches transubstantiation and practises the offering of the Mass, but not the adoration of the host. It does not however, admit the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, and denounces the worship of graven images, while it practises universally the worship of sacred pictures of the Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and the Saints. Lastly, it utterly denies the supremacy and authority of the Pope.

It would, however, be a mistake in the present state of the Greek Church, to attach much importance to their doctrines, since not one Greek priest in fifty, and certainly not one in a thousand of the laity (outside of the very few great cities), has any idea or can give any explanation of these doctrines, which were fought out by Synods and Councils above eight hundred years ago, and have been almost asleep ever since. To the millions, in fact to all but a very few studious men, Oriental Christianity, we shall find, is not a religion of creeds and doctrines like Calvinism—still less is it a religion of morals, like ancient Buddhism; it is a

religion of sacred persons exhibited in sacred pictures, worshipped with mysterious and magical rites, and commemorated by a perpetual round of fasts and festivals. It is clearly not the religion of the New Testament, nor even the religion of Basil or Chrysostom, upon whom it is fathered, but it is as clearly the religion of tradition.

The heads of the Greek Church in Turkey are the patriarchs of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and above all, of Constantinople. They appoint the archbishops and bishops, and the latter ordain the clergy. The whole of these appointments are, with very rare exceptions, made by the grossest system of bribery and simony. The patriarch of Constantinople pays the Grand Vizier 20,000 dollars or more as the price of office; and seldom enjoys it long, being frequently ousted by a successor who can bribe still higher. In two hundred years the patriarch has not averaged three years of office. The patriarch in his turn sells the archbishoprics and bishoprics, and the bishops find the means of extorting contributions from the priests, who, poor as they are, are often driven to borrow money of the Jews in order to pay for their posts.

The case seems much the same as it was with the Latin clergy in the eleventh century, when says Mosheim, "The barefaced impudence of the sacerdotal orders in buying and selling benefices, exceeded all measure and almost all credibility—and they carried matters so far as to justify that abominable traffic."*

In the kingdom of Greece the same system prevailed

* 'Ecl. History,' ii. 502, Note (Maclaine's translation).

during and after the Turkish domination, and still exists, as testified by Mustoxidi, a Greek official in the department of ecclesiastical affairs.* He adds that the bishops disobeyed the orders of the Government to keep parish registers of births, marriages, and deaths, because they knew that if such registers were established, the fabrication of certificates to meet contingencies would cease, which was a very lucrative branch of ecclesiastical profits!! †

That this evil of simony still continues after nearly fifty years of independence in Greece, may be judged by the fact that only last year (1876) the three archbishops of Cephalonia, Patras, and Messene were convicted of having bought their offices of the Ministers of State with large sums of money, besides giving rings and jewels to their wives. At the trial it came out that a fourth archbishop had done the same thing, and that it was the regular custom to do it. ‡ In fact it has prevailed for ages. These dignitaries in Turkey, when appointed, exercise, by the practice of the Turkish Government, a civil as well as spiritual authority over all the Christians in their diocese, and are universally addressed as "Despotes," i. e. Lord or Master. Their arbitrary decrees are enforced in a very summary manner by Turkish kavasses or policemen, and hence they are much feared by priests and people.

The clergy are of two kinds, the monks or caloyers, and the papas or secular priests. The monks or

* Finlay, 'Greek Revolution,' 315.

† *Ibid.* 316.

‡ 'Times' of February 28 and March 6, 1876.

caloyers are not allowed to marry, and live for the most part together in convents, situated in desert or rocky countries, and fortified against bandits.

The most famous of these fortress-convents are perched on the wooded slopes of Mount Athos, under the brightest of skies, in the loveliest mountain scenery in Europe, and set in the bluest of seas. Here the caloyers, some thousands in number, spend their idle lives far from the hum of cities, amidst the deep repose of nature, which is hardly broken except by the harsh sounds of the semantron, a kind of board beaten with a mallet, the clatter of which often awakes the tired traveller, and calls the monks at all hours of the day and night from their solitary cells to the convent church. In this church their weary days and nights pass slowly away in an endless succession of rigid fasts and solemn festivals, in perpetually repeating a tiresome round of liturgical forms, rites, ceremonies, and postures, which would be too much even for the Emperor of China or Japan to endure! The dull monotony of their existence is never cheered or relieved by the presence of woman. No Eve is suffered to enter this Paradise of nature,* which man has perversely converted into a purgatory; and some of the monks are ignorant of the face of woman! A late traveller says that one of the monks asked him in broken Italian, if women were anything like the pictures of the Virgin—pictures where a dusky featureless face leaks out from behind a plaque of jewelled

* The Rev. H. Fanshawe Tozer informs us that not only women, but ewes, she-goats, and she-asses are excluded from Mount Athos ('Researches in the Highlands of Turkey,' i. 63), which may seem ridiculous to some, but not to those who know anything about Norfolk Island.

gold! He had been brought there as a child, and did not even remember his mother!

It must not be supposed that they resemble those wonderful monks of old,—Basil, Chrysostom, or Gregory, in zeal and labour; or the Benedictine fathers, in study and learning. No charitable fraternities like the Dominicans, Lazarists, or Jesuits, are found among them, bound by their vows to tend the sick, or to educate and instruct the young. They spend their lives in prayers and contemplation and religious ceremonies, except such few of them as cultivate their farms. Their piety and their industry are purely selfish. Though possessed of some of the rarest of ancient manuscripts, they suffer them to rot for want of appreciation, the vast majority of the monks being of the peasant class, and so ignorant as to be unable to read and write better than a labouring man. In this respect, the character of the monks has deteriorated since the Mohammedan conquest, before which period it was not uncommon for noble and even royal personages to enter the convents, as a step to the great offices in the Church.

These monks have had at all times an immeasurable influence over the Greek Church, which still continues; for all the higher ranks of the clergy have for more than a thousand years been chosen from this order. In every country where the Greek Church prevails—in Turkey, Greece, Servia, Roumania, and Russia—the monks rule the secular clergy and govern the Church. Every archimandrite, bishop, archbishop, and patriarch is still a monk, and they have stamped the stern and

ugly features of monkery on every part of the Greek religion, or rather superstition, as we shall see more fully hereafter.

Cut off by celibacy from the sweet sympathies of the family life, and by solitude from intercourse with their fellow-men, soured by all sorts of privations, even of food, sleep, and conversation, and accustomed to look on pleasure as a sin, they have no sympathy with the sufferings which their austere practices inflict upon their fellow-creatures. In simple truth, they look upon these self-inflicted torments as the means of ensuring happiness in heaven.*

These convents were formerly richly endowed by superstitious Byzantine emperors and empresses, but the loss of many of these endowments by war and revolution has compelled the monks to resort in some measure to alms. During a portion of the year a few of them go about the country on a begging tour, carrying small crosses for sale, along with holy relics and miracle-working pictures, which they exhibit to the poor peasants, who devoutly kiss them and contribute something to the begging-bag. The most successful mendicant often becomes superior of the convent, and in time perhaps a bishop or archbishop.

The nunneries for women are so few that we may pass them over.

Although the monks have for ages past stereotyped the characters of the Greek religion, yet the secular

* "Pleasure and guilt are synonymous terms in the language of the monks," says Gibbon. See his wonderful picture of monkery ('Decline and Fall,' ii. cap. 37), which none but himself could have penned.

clergy are at the present day the most important body on account of their great numbers, their constant intercourse with the people, and their vast influence upon them; that is to say in the country—for in the few great towns the secular priests are despised by the better class of people.

The situation of the secular clergy in Greece and Turkey is in general very low and abject. They are taken from the lowest orders; they have no better education than an English peasant, and their condition is nearly equalized with the common people by the poverty which is common to all. They are often obliged by necessity to work as day labourers. In the villages they have often been found keeping pigs, weaving cotton, or making shoes! In fact they are only distinguishable from other labourers by their long beards, long hair, and black caps.

Their ignorance is at times almost incredible. At the time of the regency in Greece, 1832, Von Maurer states that out of a thousand priests hardly ten could write their names! Those who could, passed as learned men, and wore a little inkhorn as a sign of their learning! *

M. Ubcini relates that the priest of a poor country village had once in his life occasion to visit Salonica, and determined to profit by it to end a difficulty that had long perplexed him. He addressed himself to one of his brethren of the city, and inquired—"Is it true that Jesus Christ is God? I have heard some people say so. Then I have heard others say he is a man.

* Von Maurer, 'Das Griechische Volk,' ii. 26.

If he is God, how can he be a man? If he is a man, how can he be God? Which of these things is one to believe? It is certain one can't believe both.*

Of another priest he says: "I tried in vain to extract something from him on the subject of our different creeds, but he had never heard of the 'filioque,' nor of the Council of Nice. All that he knew of the Latin priests was that they baptized by aspersion, that they employed unleavened bread in the holy communion, and—horror of horrors!—that they shaved their chins!!"

The priests or papas † are required by the rule of their church to marry, which, of course, is directly at variance with the rule of the Church of Rome. This beneficial regulation, while it generally prevents those scandalous immoralities which have so often followed from the unnatural Roman rule, has operated to increase the necessities of the poor Greek priests by burdening them with families.

The result of poverty, necessity, and ignorance, combined with the neglect of Church government, has been and still is that the Greek priest is very generally driven to sell the rites and sacraments of the Church to his flock for money, and will often drive as hard and noisy a bargain with a peasant for the fees of a baptism, a burial, or a marriage, as if he were selling a cow or a pig. It must not, however, be supposed that

* Ubicini, 'Letters,' ii. 141.

† Properly *παπὰς*, singular; *παπάδες*, plural—usually termed popes in English; but the word pope conveys a false idea, although the same etymology belongs to the Pope and the poor Greek papas. I have followed Gibbon in using "papas" as the English plural.

his influence over the common people is therefore weak ; on the contrary, except in a few large towns, it is even greater than in Ireland, where the priests are often as poor. The Greek peasant, though he knows nothing about the doctrines of his Church, is a simple and devout believer in all her rites and ceremonies, and in the power of the papas over the keys of Heaven and Hell. By means of the spiritual engines of confession, excommunication, and absolution, which are in constant exercise, the priest wields as absolute a control over the hopes and fears of the peasant, as ever the Roman Church did in the days of Thomas à Becket.

Excommunication cuts a man off not merely from all the rites of the Church, but from employment and intercourse with his fellow-creatures. He becomes a pariah, an outcast, till he obtains absolution ; and without it the peasant believes his dead body will become a vrykolaka or vampire, unable to rest in the grave, and wandering about as an unquiet ghost.

The ignorance of the priests is attended with the unfortunate consequence that they are wholly unable to instruct the people, and hence they scarcely ever attempt to preach a sermon. In fact very few Greek Churches have any pulpit, and it is as much as most of the priests can do to read the ordinary service by rote. The principal service or mass of the Greek Church is generally holden before sunrise, and consists of lessons from the Scriptures, prayers, confessions, and legends of the Saints, and the recital of creeds and versicles which the priest or reader begins, and the choir or the congregation continue and end.

It will astonish those who are only acquainted with the English Prayer Book to learn that the full liturgies and services of the Greek Church are of such a length as to fill no less than twenty folio volumes!! One of these folios is filled with rubrical directions, which are of such a complicated and minute character, that it is said to require several years of study and practice for a priest to learn how to find out the proper lessons, prayers, and chants, which differ for every day in the year, and for every part of the day!! And yet the differences between them are often of the most trivial kind, and seem to have been dictated solely by a love of frivolous distinctions, only worthy of the master of the ceremonies at the Byzantine court. The learned and Rev. John Mason Neale, the apologist of the Greek Church, to whom I am chiefly indebted for my knowledge of those liturgies, complains of the immense prolixity of the Greek services, of their bombastic style and tragedy phrases, of the endless odes, the wearisome hymns in honour of the Virgin and the cross, containing but one meaning, expressed in a thousand different forms, of the acrostichs, the *contakia* and *stichera*.* Even the cross itself is addressed in frequent and solemn prayer, and honoured with the epithets and attributes of the Divinity!!

A considerable part of the liturgy, however, breathes the devout and fervent spirit of the golden-mouthed saint whose name it bears (*Chrysostom*), and might be fairly considered as equal to our own, excepting the endless prayers to the Virgin and the Saints; but no

* Neale, i. 12.

Englishman can read them without being offended and shocked by the style of slavish prostration and trembling fear before the Deity, by an oriental adulation only fit for a Byzantine despot to bear with, and by countless cries for mercy, "Kyrie eleyson," Lord have mercy upon us, repeated in many places *forty times running!!!** The holy monks who composed them renounced their manhood when they approached their Maker, and cried out like whipped hounds! †

It is plain from the Greek liturgies that the Deity is the object of terror, and the Virgin Mary of hope and love. No wonder that Mariolatry is the leading character of oriental worship. ‡ Hartley says, § "The titles with which the Virgin is addressed are expressive of the most immaculate nature. A frequent chant in the Greek churches describes the Virgin as more glorious than the Cherubim, and beyond comparison more honourable than the Seraphim. They pray that they may love her with all their heart and soul, and mind and strength—that they may never swerve from her commandments." A learned judge told the writer, "The people do not trouble God or Christ much, but treat them as secondary personages."

Next to the Virgin Mary, in the admiration and

* Neale, 912, 932.

† "After the capture of Thessalonica by the Latin troops in 1185, they ridiculed the chanting of the Greek priests by howling out a chorus in imitation of beaten hounds." (Finlay's 'Byzantine Empire,' ii. 265.)

‡ Though the Greek Liturgy in general use goes by the name of the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, it has clearly been much altered since his time. He certainly did not teach the worship of the Virgin (see his Homily on Matthew xii. 46-49), though he taught her perpetual virginity (Hom. 5), and encouraged the superstitious use of the sign of the Cross (Hom. 54).

§ Researches in Greece, 48.

affection of the Greeks, are the ancient hermit saints, who are faithfully represented in the ancient pictures in the convents at mount Athos as almost human skeletons, worn down to skin and bone by severe fasts, ugly and dirty, and as naked as savages, except for their shaggy hair and long grey beards, which reach to the ground.* These half human fanatics, who were once the admiration of whole nations, are still the objects of reverence, and trust, and prayer to the Greek priests and peasants.

To return to the Greek Church services, one of the strongest objections to them is that, like the Church services in England before the Reformation, they are in a dead language : for the ancient Greek of the liturgies is above a thousand years old, and is not more intelligible to the congregation than the Latin language to an Italian peasant. The same objection applies to the liturgies of Russia, Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, and Bulgaria, which are in the old Slavonic tongue.

The service is therefore chiefly in unknown tongues, and is besides muttered over rapidly in a low tone by the priests, as if it were not meant to be understood. This, however indecent, is hardly to be wondered at, when the great length of the services is taken into account, which sometimes extends to five or six hours, according to Tournefort and other travellers.† During

* Mr. Curzon says, "In the Greek Church, sanctity is always in the inverse ratio of beauty. All Greek saints are painfully ugly, but the hermits are much uglier, dirtier, and older than the rest. They must have been very fusty people besides, eating roots and living in holes like rats and mice." (Monasteries of the Levant, 246, 5th edition.)

† See Tozer, i. 86.

all this time, the whole congregation has to stand, there being no pews or chairs in Greek churches, though crutches are provided in many of them for old and weak people, on which they may lean for support, but not sit down.*

The weariness of this long, unintelligible droning service is not relieved by any music, instruments being as great an abomination to a Greek priest as to a Scotch presbyterian, and the singing is a kind of dismal Gregorian chant, performed with a strong nasal twang, without variety or harmony.†

Hobhouse says: "The chief part of the service of the mass in the Greek Church seems to consist of frequent crossings, performed with the thumb laid on the two forefingers, and *ten thousand* repetitions of 'Lord have mercy upon me,' sung through the nose, and apparently kept up as long as the breath of the chanter will last." †

I have seen a congregation of Greeks all doing their crossings together at the same part of the service, just like so many puppets pulled by the same string. The mechanical nature of the rites is very conspicuous in the 'metanoia' or act of repentance constantly performed by the caloyers, which is literally the same as the Chinese ko-tow, and consists of kneeling down or prostration, and knocking the head against the

* In some Russian churches and in the Greek Church in London they have introduced stalls or pews; but the people stand during most part of the service.

† In the principal Russian churches they have a choir, which sings the responses in rich and beautiful harmonies. In St. Petersburg they go to great expense to procure the finest voices for the cathedral.

‡ 'Travels,' vol. i. 465.

ground. In Lent this is done by the monks three hundred times in twenty-four hours!*

In many respects the usages of the Greek Church bear a strong resemblance to the Roman Catholic ceremonial. The rich and varied vestments of the priest, his frequent movements about the steps of the sanctuary, accompanied by acolytes bearing tapers, his perpetual bowings and crossings, and his busy manipulations at the altar or table, with his back to the congregation, together with the lavish use of burning lamps and candles in broad day, and frequent swinging of the smoking censers, would satisfy the most advanced ritualist. These, as well as the processions of priests and deacons round the church, might lead a stranger to suppose he was witnessing the Roman Catholic service. But one thing would strike him as entirely different—the total absence of altars and images. He looks around in vain for those numerous side chapels, each with its altar and its image, which he sees in most Roman Catholic churches; and even the high altar at the end of the choir is not to be seen, being completely hidden from view by a close screen reaching up to the roof, behind which the priest performs the mystery of consecrating the bread and wine for the sacrament. This screen is called by the Greeks the “Templon,” or “Iconostasis,” i. e. the picture-stand, and is usually covered from top to bottom with pictures of the Saviour, the Virgin, and the Saints. Other pictures cover the walls, and represent events in sacred or church history,

* Hartley, 77; Waddington, 87.

as well as in the lives of the Saints; while some depict the last judgment, and some the torments of hell. Instead, however, of being the masterpieces of great artists, such as one sees in the churches of Rome, Antwerp, or Milan, they are wretched daubs, only fit for the sign of a village alehouse; but they are none the less revered by the poor ignorant worshippers, and the worst of them perform the most miracles. The first thing a Greek peasant does on entering a church, is to advance with many bows and crossings of himself to the screen, where he devoutly kisses the principal pictures, especially that of the Virgin Mary, which usually holds the place of honour. These rude daubs are not uncommonly decorated with gold or silver crowns, and during service, many bring wax tapers and burn them in front of some particular picture to do it honour. Sometimes they are adorned with pieces of money, rudely stuck to them by wax, the gifts of the peasants, who thus fee the Saints as if they were lawyers.* Even in the churches of the great cities, the pictures are little better in quality, though the profusion of them is so great, that not only the screen, but the pillars, the walls, and the roof are covered up with them as thickly as the Egyptian temples at Thebes are adorned with hieroglyphics.

The adoration paid to these pictures by the crowd of ignorant worshippers is quite as great and as devout as that which the lower orders of Roman Catholics on the continent practise towards their images. The Greek peasant kneels to them, kisses them, prays to them,

* In this they faithfully follow the ancient pagan belief. *Δωρα πείθειν καὶ θεῶν λόγος.*—EURIPIDES.

decorates them, and hangs them with votive offerings in grateful testimony of miracles believed to be wrought by the saint or by the picture. Some pictures have a great reputation for working miraculous cures, and are sent for by the sick instead of calling in a doctor. It is the frequency of the miracles performed by these pictures which forms the grand argument relied on by the monks (says Mr. Tozer) in support of the worship paid to them.* It was so 1200 years ago. "The scruples of reason or piety," says Gibbon (vi. 189), "were silenced by the strong evidence of visions and miracles."

In every Greek house the devotions of the family are conducted before the picture of the favourite saint, and before it lamps or candles are kept always burning. And yet although all the signs of idolatry are here seen, as plainly as they were in the ancient temples of Jupiter or Diana, the Greek Church has the absurdity to profess its horror at the idolatry of the Roman Church in sanctioning the worship of graven images, and anathematises the worshippers. Vain as the distinction may seem to us between the adoration of images and that of pictures, it has been the cause of bloody persecutions in the Greek Church, and was one main reason of its final separation from the Roman communion.†

No veneration of relics or images in the west, says

* See 'Christian Remembrancer' for April, 1851, p. 340.

† In Hope's 'Anastasius,' a capital story is told of a Greek who employed a French artist to paint him a Madonna. The painter did it with such force of light and shade, that it seemed to stand out of the canvas. When the Greek saw it, he swore it was a scandalous production—almost as bad as an image—and refused to pay for it. This hits off the orthodox Greek rogue to a shade.

Stanley (362), can convey an adequate notion of the veneration for pictures in Russia. It is the main support and stay of their religious faith and practice; it is like the rigid observance of Sunday to a Scotchman, or the *auto-de-fé* to an ancient Spaniard. Everywhere in public and private the sacred picture is the consecrating element. In the corner of every room, at the corner of every street, over gateways, in offices, in steamers, in stations, in taverns, is the picture hung with the lamp burning before it. In domestic life it plays the part of the family Bible, of the wedding gift, of the birthday present, of the ancestral portrait. Of a whole army, there is not a single man but carries in his knapsack a gaudy picture in a simple cover, with which he never parts, and wherever he halts he sets it up on a piece of wood and worships it.*

Part of the services of the Greek Church is read in a language intelligible to the people, namely the lives or legends of the Saints, and these appear to have taken the place of sermons. These legends are stuffed full of miraculous and impossible events redounding to the glory of the saint, which are swallowed with devout credulity by the ignorant hearers. Many of these legends hold up to admiration and worship, not the great men who have spent their lives and powers in doing good to their fellow-creatures, and in raising them in civilization and virtue, freedom and knowledge, but filthy naked hermits and monks, covered with hair and dirt, who passed their wretched lives like wild beasts, in caves and mountains and deserts,

* Macarius, quoted in Stanley, 363.

far away from the society of men, starving and tormenting themselves in order to merit heaven, and crazed with solitude and fasting, and the religious terrors of a disordered brain. These pernicious examples, acting upon weak enthusiasts, have kept up the idle breed of monks and hermits to this day, and have filled the minds of the people with an utterly false and corrupt standard of what is good and admirable, and worthy to be imitated. They have also nourished an unlimited credulity in the people, of which, according to undeniable testimony, the priests do not fail to take advantage by imposing upon the ignorant peasantry. Accordingly, all sorts of miracles are practised by the priests, and devoutly believed by the people. The casting out of devils from persons afflicted with epilepsy or lunacy is common, and the cure of various disorders by relics and sacred pictures is still more so, and does not fail to yield a harvest of fees to the priests.

An old Greek told a traveller : “ I should never end were I to relate to you all the tricks and impostures of our priests ; nevertheless, there is generally more ignorance than evil design. It is often in all sincerity that they give Heaven a share of the profits of frauds practised on the people, and promote the superstition and fanaticism of the vulgar.” “ They have no conception of Christianity but in its external rites, and can only teach others what they believe and practise themselves. Their whole religion consists in the constant repetition of the sign of the cross, in attending mass, in kissing the pictures which adorn the temple or screen, and in the strict observance of

Lent and the other fasts. Thus it happens that a priest may consent to give absolution to a thief or murderer, especially if the victim was an infidel or schismatic, but never to one who has transgressed the 'Tesseracosti'—i. e. the four fasts. I leave you to judge what must be the effect of such a religion on the popular morals."*

The sacraments of the Greek Church have some peculiarities. They baptize always by a three-fold immersion, and look upon Protestants and Roman Catholics as not baptized at all. In the Lord's Supper they mix water with the wine, and give both bread and wine to the communicant; but this they do with a spoon—a singular but ancient usage—probably to prevent him drinking to excess. They also insist most strictly on using leavened bread in the Eucharist, and in a dispute on this serious point with some Roman Catholic priests in the Levant, the Greek priests produced what they insisted to be a piece of the very loaf used by Jesus Christ in the last supper, which, being found to be leavened, they relied upon as triumphant proof!!†

Trifling or absurd or superstitious as these things may appear to us, they have the strongest hold upon the minds of the common people, who have been used to reverence them from infancy, who are in the deepest ignorance and darkness, and who never heard a doubt about the truth or sacredness of the things which they and their fathers always worshipped. The sincerity of their faith and devotion is shown by their regular attend-

* Ubicini, ii. 162.

† Pashley's 'Crete,' i. 316.

ance on the services of the Church, and especially by the strictness with which they keep the fasts and festivals.

The fasts of the Greek Church are one of its strongest features, and are some of the heaviest burdens ever imposed upon mankind by superstition. Besides two fast days in every week, there is a two-months' fast in Lent, a forty-days' fast before Christmas, and two others, the Lent of St. Peter and St. Paul, and that of the Virgin. During these fasts the poor people have to subsist almost wholly on bread and green vegetables, not a morsel of flesh or fish, or fowl or eggs, butter or milk is allowed; and infants, we are told, frequently die because the poor mother cannot take proper nourishment.

Two recent writers, Captain St. Clair and Mr. Consul Brophy, who resided among the villages of Bulgaria, say, that "during a fast of sixty days, the scrupulous peasant mother will refuse her sick infant any other nourishment than bread, onions, or garlic, and cabbage-water. The child may die, but the fast has been observed."*

In the Greek islands, the peasants are driven to eat the disgusting octopus with snails during the fasts, considering them as neither fish nor flesh; † but a poor man will throw away his loaf if it has been touched with oil. Even the pirates and robbers keep the fasts most strictly, and despise any one who neglects them. Basil, a notorious brigand, after an affray in which a

* Residence in Bulgaria, 97.

† There is no doubt that both snails and the octopus were eaten by the ancient Greeks, but disguised with rich sauces. (See Anaxippus cited by Mahaffy, 'Social Life in Greece,' 284, note 2.) A course of the octopus, however, through Lent and without sauce, would be only fit for a shark.

whole family were murdered by his band, saw one of his men making free with a pot of butter. "Pagan," he cried, dealing a severe blow, "hast thou no fear of God? Is it not Friday?"!!

These fasts are usually followed by the festivals of the Church, and as might be expected, those who can afford it, then indemnify themselves for the privations they have gone through during the fasts by indulging in excessive feasting and jollity. In countries where wine or spirits are cheap, as in Roumania, Bulgaria, and Russia, the peasant gets drunk on the feast days as of course and refuses to work, and after the end of the great fasts, the peasants are often drunk for a week together. Astonishing as it may seem, it is the literal truth that there are 226 fast days in the year besides festivals,* and the result is, as I learn from an engineer who lived in Roumania, that he could not get the Christian peasants to work more than 130 days in the year—a fact which he considered sufficient to account for the total absence of progress and prosperity. The stranger is compelled to have the almanac constantly before him to learn on what days he can get business attended to.

The rites or practices of confession, of excommunication, and of absolution, play an all-important part in the Greek Church, and give the priests a very pernicious power over their flocks. The practice of auricular confession makes the priest master of all their offences, secret or open. The dread of excommunication is sufficient to make the superstitious multitude submit

* Neale, 744.

to the penances which the priest imposes, and which usually include some gift to the Church; while, on the other hand, absolution may be had, as travellers assure us, for the worst of crimes, by any offender who can pay a decent fine to the priest, whose necessities are such as will not suffer him to be too hard on a sinner. An old Greek said, "You may accuse yourself to the Pneumaticos (the confessor), of no matter what crime, absolution certainly follows if you pay in proportion to the offence; for every sin with us has its price."* The traveller Choiseul-Gouffier declares that in his time, ninety years ago, every pirate had a papas or caloyer who regularly absolved him and his crew on their return to shore, and who had a regular tariff of crimes, with the price of absolution for each.† If a man's house is robbed, a few piasters will purchase the excommunication of the suspected party, and a few more will purchase him absolution. "Crimes against property," say Messrs. St. Clair and Brophy, "false witness, and many such acts as are not only against the precepts of every Christian religion, but also punishable by law, are mere peccadillos, for which absolution may be purchased from the priest at the rate of an egg a piece (p. 101). By these means, and by the sale of the "aghiasmos"—that is to say, the monthly blessing and sprinkling of the houses with holy water—the poor priests make up their scanty subsistence. The system in use to this day appears to be as bad as the sale of indulgences by the Popes nearly four hundred years

* Ubicini, ii. 158.

† 'Voyage Pittoresque,' i. 101; Von Maurer, i. 96.

ago, which aroused the indignation of Luther, and brought about the Reformation.

Another feature which has always characterized the Greek Church is a vicious and obstinate propensity to dispute and quarrel about trifles—about mere forms and ceremonies, as if they were matters of infinite importance, to differ about which was just ground for treating your neighbour as a heathen and an enemy. Thus the Greek Church has at various times had most furious wars with the Roman Church, and with its own sectaries, as to the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist, as to baptising by immersion or by sprinkling, as to whether the priests should be shaved or wear beards, or give the benediction with three fingers instead of two, and as to the mode of crossing themselves.

An archbishop of Novgorod declared solemnly that those who repeat the word “Alleluia” only twice at certain parts of the liturgy sing to their own damnation. And a celebrated ecclesiastical council in 1551 put such matters as the position of the fingers in making the sign of the cross on the same level as heresies.* To shave the beard was pronounced at the council of Moscow in the seventeenth century, a sin which even the blood of martyrs could not expiate! †

At this present time, the Greek Church in Bulgaria makes its crosses with four equal arms, while in Wallachia they make one arm longer than the rest, as we do, and are therefore treated as heretical and hateful by the others. I won't say that these differences are not as important as the question whether an English

* Wallace, ii. 3.

† Stanley, 475.

ritualist should wear an alb or a chasuble, or use a wafer instead of bread, or put water into the wine, or turn his back to the congregation at the Lord's Supper ; but I will venture to assert that this obstinate animosity about trifles has brought contempt upon Christians, has poisoned the very sources of human brotherhood, and has produced a great part of the divisions, the wars, and persecutions which disgrace the history of the Church.

A still more odious feature of the Greek Church is its bigotry and persecuting spirit. This is strongly exhibited in the long and weary list of anathemas which is found in the Greek liturgies, against all heretics who differ from the Greek Church, or who will not worship the sacred pictures, but especially in the conduct of the Greek Christians to the Jews in the east of Europe. It is impossible to give an idea of the contempt and hatred in which the Jews are held by the Greeks. A Greek will beg your pardon for mentioning a hog or a Jew in your presence. When the Greek revolution broke out fifty years ago, nearly all the Jews in the island of Hydra were put to death by the Greeks, and at the capture of Tripolitza by the Greeks about 5000 Jews perished. Turks and Jews were treated alike, and their dead bodies were cast out like dogs.

The persecution of the Jews in Roumania has lately been inquired into in Parliament, and from the Consular despatches which I have read, it comes out that the Christian population still believes in the dreadful calumny against the Jews which prevailed in this country 600 years ago, namely that the Jews

sacrifice a Christian child, and use his blood in their passover. Some examples of the results of this atrocious charge have occurred in the large towns of Roumania within the last seven years. The populace excited by this, and by their intense hatred of the Jews, have risen against them, plundered their houses, wrecked their synagogues, and beaten and wounded them till they took refuge with the European Consuls, who had to bestir themselves to the utmost to save the Jews from a general massacre.

The mass of the Greek Christians do not think there are in the world any true Christians except themselves and the Russians, and are infatuated beyond all belief with the superiority of their own religion to all others. They consider any baptism but their own as good for nothing. They hate the Roman Catholic religion much worse than the Mohammedan. A very intelligent and travelled Greek of Smyrna, who confessed and lamented the degraded state of the Greek clergy, finished a conversation with his friend M. Ubicini, a Roman Catholic, by saying, "What a sad thing that you should never have received baptism! Alas! You can never behold the face of God."* As for the English, the Greeks contend we are not Christians at all. They say, "It is certain you are not Christians—for you do not cross yourselves." These are the people whom we are urged to fight for!

In 1839 the Greek synod and patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated all who should buy or sell or read the books of the Protestant missionaries.† In

* Ubicini, ii. 168.

† Rufus Anderson, 'History of Missions to Oriental Christians,' vol. i. 117.

1845 the Holy synod of Greece at Athens condemned and outlawed Dr. King, an American missionary, as an heretic and impostor, and sentenced his book to the flames, for preaching and writing against the worship of the Virgin Mary. They stirred up the government to prosecute him, and he was sentenced to imprisonment and banishment, and was even in danger of his life from popular violence.* In Bulgaria, the efforts of the American missionaries were opposed by the Greek clergy with very great rancour.† They excommunicated every convert, and all Christian shops were forbidden to sell him either food or clothing. Finlay says that this intolerance became a national characteristic under the teaching of the monks (159).

Those who consider the total ignorance of the Greek peasantry, and their extreme credulity, fostered by the priests, will not be at all surprized to hear that a crowd of other popular superstitions prevail among the multitude, and keep them in perpetual fear of unseen beings.

The belief in the Nēreids (*νεπαΐδες*) is as universal as it was in ancient Greece. They dwell by the seashore, by rivers and fountains, in caverns and woods, and on mountains, and chiefly appear at night. They are considered dangerous to men, whom they sometimes bewitch, and cause their destruction, but are particularly dreaded for carrying off children. Women wear amulets to avert their influence, and call them "the good ladies" to propitiate them.

Every fountain and well, every tree, has its pre-

* Anderson, vol. i. 381-302.

† Baker's 'Turkey,' 350.

siding spirit, haunting it and identified with it. Every house has its genius, who is greatly revered, and is believed to resent any injury offered to it. They also dread a kind of evil spirits who take pleasure in killing and eating children, and every poor child who perishes through consumption or the severity of their monkish fasts, is supposed to be eaten by these spirits, or to have been fascinated by the evil eye. Prayers are offered up to avert this kind of fascination.

The belief in vrykolakas or vampires is widely spread among the Greek Islands, in Thessaly, Epirus, and Turkey. The people think that some persons come to life again after death, and wander abroad by night. The more malignant of these nearly correspond with the vampire, which was supposed to keep itself alive by sucking the blood of men. The terror caused by this superstition is intense. One of the principal causes which change people into vrykolakas after death is excommunication by the priest. In some cases priests have actually been killed for fear they should inflict it. The power of absolution resides in the priest or bishop, and it is believed to lay at rest the unquiet ghost. Very remarkable stories are told by travellers on this subject.

Mr. Tozer says that the ideas of the modern Greeks respecting death and the state of the dead are absolutely and entirely pagan, so far as we have the means of judging of them ; and that in the numerous ballads which relate to it, there is not a trace of any features derived from Christian sources, while the old classical conceptions are everywhere manifest.*

* Tozer, ii. 323.

From this general sketch it will be seen by every observer that the Oriental or Greek Christianity of the present day bears a strong resemblance to the Roman Catholic religion in Europe during the worst period of its history, in the night of the dark ages. For though the arrogant tyranny and the heavy exactions of the Pope are wanting, and though the abominable corruptions produced by the celibacy of the clergy have no parallel in the Eastern Church,* yet there is the same depth of ignorance in the priests, and the same unbounded credulity and superstition in the people, the same absence of moral and religious instruction, and of any rational religion. The services of the Church are equally unintelligible, and its rites equally wear the appearance of mysterious incantations and magical ceremonies. There is the same swarm of impostures and false miracles; the same idolatry of saints; the same sale and prostitution of the offices and sacraments of the Church; the same waste of the time and destruction of the industry and sobriety of the people in the fasts and festivals. Add to this the same ferocious bigotry, hatred, and persecution of the Jews.

Again we repeat—and it cannot be too often repeated, to our Romanizing priests—this is the religion of tradition!

That such a system should exert any wholesome influence on the morals of the people, that it should excite them to virtue or restrain them from crime, is

* We cannot vouch for the monasteries, having seen the reports of Sir Thomas Cromwell's commissioners in the British Museum on the state of the English monasteries before the dissolution.

not to be expected, seeing that it gives no instruction in the duties of life, that the most solemn act of repentance is represented by the ceremony of the kowtow, that the Saints are everywhere propitiated with money, and that the guilty conscience and the dread of hell are habitually lulled with the opiate of absolution, sold like laudanum by a druggist!

The rites of the Church accordingly appear to be reconcilable with any kind of crime in practice, and we need not be surprised to find that the bandits who captured the four young Englishmen at Marathon, in April, 1870, duly attended the Greek church on Palm Sunday with their prisoners, stacking their arms in the porch, only four days before they murdered them.* A Corfiote peasant, by orders of his lord, and on a fast-day, shot a Jew usurer to whom his lord was deeply in debt. The man cut off the ears of the dead Jew, brought them to his employer, and laid them on the table. His master paid him for the job, and invited him to take some meat and drink to cheer up his spirits. But he refused it, saying, "No master, I have perilled my life to please you, but I cannot peril my soul by breaking the fast." The man was hung for the murder, and the judge who tried him gave the writer the anecdote. It is probable that the man expected to get absolution for only killing a hog of a Jew, and that his master would pay the fine to the Church.

It would be easy to fill these pages with extracts from the writings of those who have long lived in Greece and Turkey, declaring the little effect which

* Tuckerman, 256-291.

this Oriental superstition has on the people in restraining their national vices, or directly charging it with promoting crime; but I shall spare the reader the infliction—the evil and immoral tendency of such a system being too obvious.

That this system is pernicious to the material welfare of the people in the highest degree, no one can doubt who reads the descriptions given of the Greek peasantry. It is the idleness and dissipation produced by the endless fasts and festivals,* which keep the people miserably poor, which keep the country almost without roads or carriages or land traffic, and the greater part of the land uncultivated, waste, undrained, and marshy, producing pestilential fevers which carry off most of the children, and enfeeble the men and women. Until these long fasts and idle festivals are abolished, the people will always continue poor and wretched and ignorant, totally unable to afford a decent education, or to make any advance in the comforts of life, and even without an effort to raise themselves above the level in which they were born. To the same cause is attributed by travellers the very slow progress of the Russian peasantry in civilization and their drunken

* It may be hard to say whether the ancient Greeks wasted as many days in the year in idle dissipation during their many festivals, fairs, games, and anniversaries, as their modern successors. (See Bp. Thirlwall's 'Greece,' viii. 514; and Dr. Curtius' 'Greece,' by Ward, ii. 23–35.) But there is this vast difference between them—that the labours of the shop, the manufactory, and the farm were done for the old Greeks by their slaves, who were in Attica and other places four times as numerous as the freemen, whereas the modern Greeks must do all their labours themselves (see the authorities collected in Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities, tit. *Servus*); and there was nothing like the fasts of the Greek Church in antiquity.

habits. The Greek Church is the grand enemy of temperance and industry!!

As to the long fasts, although the climate of Greece and Turkey and the constitutional abstemiousness of the Oriental races in general, with the aid of long habit, enable the peasantry to endure privations which would destroy the constitution of an Englishman, there is no doubt that their health and strength are severely affected by them. I am assured by an engineer that they cannot do above half the day's work of an English labourer, and travellers say that they often look famished during the fasts, while their children seem pining for want. A very large portion of them only taste meat once or twice a year, at the great festivals, when they kill a kid or sometimes a lamb, for a grand feast. An attack of fever soon destroys them, and such things as medical advice and quinine are utterly out of their reach, in lieu of which some miracle-working picture is called in.

I must here bring to an end this long indictment of the errors, follies, superstitions, and vices of the Oriental Church, of which my readers are probably as weary as myself. Some will be ready to suspect that I have overcharged the dark colours of the picture, and that it cannot be so bad as I have painted it. To these I will only say that the very worst things I have described are drawn from Christian travellers like Tournefort and Sir Paul Rycout, who were commissioned to inquire fully into the matter; from long residents in the country like Ubcini, Sir Thos. Wyse, and Lady Easthope; from Protestant missionaries and priests like

Mr. Hartley, Dean Waddington, and Dr. King; and from men of learning who have made the subject a special study, and have seen what they describe—such as Pashley, Tozer, Hobhouse, Fraser, and Dean Stanley—and from a variety of modern travellers.* At the same time, it would no doubt be erroneous and unjust to suppose that there are not some few learned monks and prelates to be found in the cities, and some pious priests, in spite of all their errors. Of the sincere devotion of the common people in general there can be no doubt at all. They prove it by observing all the severe fasts with the greatest strictness, by their constant attendance on its services, and observance of its rites, as well as by such liberality to the priests as their abject poverty will afford. Many instances are related of Greek peasants who, after having been seduced into Mohammedanism for a time, repented their apostacy, and heroically suffered martyrdom from the Turks by a public recantation. The Greek peasants have many kind and good qualities, besides great natural talents, and it is impossible not to pity them and wish to help them, when we contrast the wealth of privileges enjoyed by an Englishman with the ignorance, poverty, superstition, and despotism, spiritual and political, which crush down the Greek and the Bulgarian peasant, even without taking account of the cruelties which have been inflicted on some of them.

* Whoever will read the description given by St. Clair and Brophy of the Christians of the Bulgarian villages of the Balkans, will think I have understated the case. Those writers denounce the ruder Bulgarian Christianity as no better than African fetishism. ('Residence in Bulgaria,' chap. vii.)

Let us now halt for a while on the height to which we have climbed, and look down on the scene we have travelled through. Can any man whatever, unless he be a Mephistopheles, consider it without a melancholy feeling of depression? Can any Christian, any statesman, any philosopher view it without concern? Is it not a scene which must strike the pious Christian with grief and amazement, which is enough to make a philanthropist despair of the welfare of humanity, and even to cloud the most philosophic mind with a gloomy shade?

The Christian sees his religion corrupted and degraded into an idolatrous superstition, with magical rites bearing a strong resemblance to ancient Paganism, with very little of its primitive form or purity remaining, and with an almost universal ignorance among priests and people of the morals and doctrines of the New Testament. He is also amazed to observe that while petty miracles of all sorts abound in the Greek Church, the greatest and most necessary miracle of all, and the one most worthy of the divine goodness, is utterly wanting—namely, the healing of the leprosy of the Church! Here, if ever in the world's history, is a "dignus vindice nodus"! Here if ever, the pious mind might expect with devout assurance the promise to be fulfilled that the gates of hell should not prevail against the Church, and that the hand which was reached out to Peter on the lake of Galilee would be stretched forth again to keep the Church from sinking! But no! for above a thousand years it has continued in the same degraded condition, or has been

sinking generation after generation into deeper and deeper corruption, without a Luther or a Calvin, without a Wesley or a Whitfield, without even a Bible in the hands of the people! Here is assuredly an awful mystery, which faith may humbly receive, but which reason cannot penetrate.

To the philanthropist the view of the Greek Church is hardly less mournful, for he sees the failure of one of the grandest and most generous efforts in history to raise the religious and moral condition of a large part of the human family. He beholds the noble army of martyrs succeeded by a sordid herd of hirelings, and the religion of love and mercy transformed into a cruel and hateful superstition, which condemns all its leaders to renounce the soft influences of wife and children, and even of society, and all that sweetens the mingled cup of life—which loads its followers with a burden of fasts and privations too heavy for humanity to bear—which sells absolution for the murder of a heretic cheaper than for breaking the fasts, while it teaches them to hate, anathematize, and persecute all those who do not follow their own rites; which paralyses their industry, and thereby condemns them to perpetual poverty, ignorance, and filth—to a condition little above that of their own dogs or cattle, and in which their children are annually swept off by fevers caused by the total ignorance and neglect of natural laws, and the stupid trust in holy pictures, crosses, and relics.

The student of history who surveys the vast and gloomy picture of Eastern Christendom, will recognise—not without a sigh—the impressive spectacle of an

ancient religion in ruins, and all overgrown with the luxuriant ivy of superstition—another great example of the mysterious but inevitable law of growth, decline, and decay which governs all things human, or allied with humanity, and sooner or later impels in the same downward course not merely kingdoms, governments, laws, and languages, but even religions; and which seems to have affected Oriental Christianity not less than Buddhism.* He will also recognize the irresistible tendency of mankind, after they have been raised above themselves by the fervid zeal, unwearied labours, and heroic self-sacrifice of the apostles of a new and generous faith, to sink back again to their natural level, when the transient fires of religious enthusiasm have burnt out, and ease, pleasure, selfishness, and worldly cares have resumed their permanent influence over priests and people. Equally unmistakable will appear to him the evidences of the great change which every old religion undergoes in the course of time from the condition of the people who receive it; from their national character and state of civilization, their freedom or slavery, their poverty and ignorance, or wealth and education. To him it may seem that prodigies and miracles always abound among an ignorant and superstitious people, and are always wanting or always vanish on scrutiny, in an enlightened age or nation; that the worship of images and pictures could never be believed or practised by a highly-educated class; and,

* Mr. Ferguson seems to have proved that the idolatrous worship of Buddha was not introduced for centuries after his death. ('History of Indian Architecture,' 91, 124-5, ed. 1876.)

on the contrary, that an ignorant and credulous peasantry require it as children love picture-books—that the cold and abstract forms of presbyterian worship would be as intolerable to the lively, imaginative Greek, as the bowings and crossings and kissings, the candles and incense and processions of the Eastern Church would be intolerable to a disciple of Knox ; finally, that the gross superstitions of the Greek Church could not possibly have grown to their present height if they had not been nourished by despotism in the Government, slavery in the people, and the deepest poverty and ignorance both in the priests and the laity.

How is it possible that a pure or rational faith, free from superstition, should exist amongst a people whose dwellings and manner of life are described by an American missionary as follows : * “ The ignorance and degradation of the masses of the people of Turkey, out of the great cities, is extreme. Cleanliness, order, and even decency in their dwellings, and in the care of their persons, are generally ignored. They live and eat and sleep so almost exactly like domestic animals, that it is difficult to discern the human element at all. As to what we mean by home, the domestic hearth, and the proprieties and amenities of daily social life, there exists the profoundest ignorance and the most stolid indifference. The wife and mother makes no toilet on rising in the morning. She has slept in the clothing, such as it is, that she had worn during the day. She gives no attention to her own or her children’s dressing or hair, except once a week or less often, when they go to

* ‘ Missionary Herald ’ for 1873, p. 187.

a public bath, or elsewhere perform some special ablutions. The children, when they wake, jump up from the mats on which they have slept, and are turned out to shift for themselves. They roll up the beds and pile them up in a corner till evening. They eat precisely as those animals do whose forefeet are hands, except that there is one dish, and perhaps a wooden spoon for each person.

“The sleeping, the eating, and the work, often of more than one family, are in one room, and the room is frequently or commonly in such a state as no well-to-do American farmer would consider tolerable for the animals he is fattening for his table.

“Let us look into one of these rooms. The walls and floors are simply dried and hardened mud. There is a total absence of chair, table, bedstead, or any article of furniture, except a wooden chest or two. In and about the fire-place are a few cooking utensils. On the right side are bags of wheat, flour, barley, &c., and various trappings of the donkeys and oxen, of course alive with vermin. On the left of the fire-place is the pile of vacated beds, also densely peopled with living creatures. Lower down is the spinning-wheel. Overhead are hung cabbages, strings of onions, &c., while the poor neglected children, dirty and in rags, grow up like the wild asses' colt.”

Colonel Mure in his *Tour in Greece* (i. 28) speaks of “the aversion of the Christian population of the whole of Turkey in Europe to ablution or change of raiment, or even to divesting themselves of the garments they habitually wear, and which are allowed

to go to decay on the person of the proprietor, until necessity or a regard for the decency of the exterior man induces him to procure a substitute. These customs are not peculiar to the lower class, but extend in a greater or less degree to the nobles and chieftains, who consider filth as one of the characters of martial genius or veteran service. On setting out on a campaign, they put on a clean frock or fustanella, soaked in grease, which remains on their person, as a matter of military etiquette, night and day until their return home, when their wives have a new suit ready to replace it. The consequence is that the persons and habitations of all classes swarm with vermin to an extent probably unknown in any other country. Not only are undressing on going to bed and sleeping in sheets and blankets things unheard of, but so much as bed or bedding of any kind, other than rush mats, or their shaggy hair capotes and goatskin mantles, are luxuries to which, together with a table and a chair, the Greek population below a certain rank are altogether strangers. A German staff-surgeon employed to inspect the country recruits assured me that the clothes of many of them were found so tightly glued to their bodies by accumulated filth and vermin, that they could not be drawn off without considerable pain to the wearer, and were frequently obliged to be cut up on his person and detached piecemeal."

The aristocratic Turks having been expelled, he says the native peasant and artisan are now left to the enjoyment of the same unsophisticated mode of life as the cattle on the mountain sides, or as the dogs that

defend the hovels which afford man and beast a common shelter from the sun or the storm.

In another passage (i. 117) he thus describes the hovels they live in : “A small oblong area, between two gable ends connecting side walls of mud, or the poorest kind of masonry, with a roof of thatch or tile, through the crevices of which the smoke escapes, and a portion of daylight was admitted, without windows, chimney, flooring, or pavement of any kind, is the common habitation of the lower class. At present some of the towns contain a few tolerable houses, and Athens has many both elegant and substantial edifices ; but nothing certainly can be more dismal than the aspect of those masses of hovels or rubbish which have succeeded to the classic sites of Plataea or Mycene, &c. The church itself is often one of the most miserable sheds of the place, and frequently without a roof.”

It is plain that the superstition which I have endeavoured to expose is only too well matched with the degraded state in which both priests and peasantry live, and that the first step, the indispensable condition, towards raising and purifying their religion, is to raise the condition of the poor priests and people by giving them better homes, better food, and better education. But this cannot possibly be effected without getting rid of the greater part of the fasts and festivals, and replacing them by days of steady industry ; and so long as the bishops and heads of the Church are monks they will never learn that ‘laborare est orare,’ but will oppose the change with all their might, foreseeing that

the very source of their power would be dried up if such a violent shock were given to the ancient customs of the Church, and if the people were taught to think for themselves. We shall presently see that the heads of the Church are the enemies of education.

The truth is the unfortunate people are monk-ridden, and have been almost ever since the days of Chrysostom, who, together with Basil, did all that zeal, eloquence, energy, and example could do to promote the spread of monkery, and succeeded only too well.*

This Oriental Christianity is everywhere stamped with the repulsive and unnatural features of monkery. It has been ruled and moulded by monks for 1200 years. It was the monks who invented the long, frequent, and rigid fasts which exhaust the poor peasants; it was they who instituted the numerous festivals which have made idleness and festivity habitual to the lower orders, and steady industry impossible; it was they who invented the wearisome and interminable prayers and services which waste the fleeting hours of the day, and exhaust the endurance of humanity; it is they who have taught the people unlimited credulity and abject submission to the priesthood, and have thus made them the helpless slaves of superstition from the cradle to the grave; it is they who have taught them that fasting was the first of virtues, and heresy the worst of crimes, till they came to look on a man who ate mutton in Lent as worse than he who murdered a Catholic!!

* Both these extraordinary men ruined their health and shortened their lives by their austerities. See their lives by Canon Venables in Smith and Wace's 'Dictionary of Christian Biography.' It may be safely said that their great talents and energies have proved a curse to millions.

The result has been that the most ignorant, corrupt, and degraded Church in Europe proudly boasts of being the Holy Orthodox Church, and looks with holy horror on all the others—Catholic, Protestant, or Armenian!

We are now in a condition to judge of what the people of England escaped from by the Protestant Reformation, and what the Ritualists and Romanizing priests are striving to lead us back to. In the state of the Greek Christians we have a living picture of the ignorance, the superstition, the frauds and false miracles, the priestcraft, the spiritual tyranny, the substitution of rites and ceremonies for rational religion, which prevailed in England before Luther arose. We see what is really meant by the reign of priestcraft and monkery, and by the rule of tradition.

We must now look with amazement at some recent attempts to bring about a union of the English with the Oriental Church. We see how wide and how deep is the gulf that separates them. It is even greater than that which separates the educated, accomplished, refined, and benevolent English clergyman—the friend and helper of the poor, the model of a Christian gentleman—from the poor, dirty, shaggy, ignorant, and superstitious peasant called a Greek papas, the slave of his monkish bishop, and the extortioner of his parishioners. The poor papas may be washed and educated and freed from episcopal tyranny, and raised above want; he may be taught to be the shepherd instead of the robber of his flock. But when all this is done, the doctrines of Basil which teach monkery, and the decrees of the second

council of Nice which establish idolatry, and the authority of tradition which sanctions every corruption, will still form a broad and impassable gulf between the two Churches, as wide as the distance between the eighth and the nineteenth centuries. Our respect for those who entertained the proposal of a union,* will not allow us to suppose that they had made themselves acquainted with the true state of the Greek Church. Its affinities with the Church of Rome in nearly all points which we dislike and repudiate, are indeed conspicuous; and a union between them would not be unnatural. Such a union was attempted, and apparently accomplished, before the fall of the Byzantine empire, which it might have possibly saved had not the incurable pride and bigotry of the Greeks broken it up; but a union of the English Church with the Greek would indeed be a marriage of a fair woman with a leper!

We can now answer the question, Could we ever consent to go to war in defence of such a pernicious superstition as this? Not until we renounce our Protestantism as well as our intelligence, and go back to idolatry, monkery, and superstition. However indignant we may feel at the inhuman atrocities which have been committed by barbarous Turkish troops, we cannot allow any sympathy for religion to mingle with it. All our repugnance for priestcraft and sottish superstition rebels against such a suggestion. The

* It is evident that Dean Stanley entertains no such illusion. See his very interesting speech at the dinner to the Archbishop of Syra. ('Times' of January 26, 1870, p. 5.)

great Eastern question, it is now clear, ought to be wholly disentangled from the religious element.

We may still, however, feel a deep interest in the inquiry, What hopes may be reasonably entertained of a reformation in the Greek Church, and of raising the Christians of Turkey in particular to the level of a pure and rational religion, especially if the war now pending, or the efforts of diplomacy, should result in relieving them from the Turkish yoke?

A great many good people who do not study history, are very ready to attribute all the corruptions and errors of Oriental Christianity as it now is in Turkey and Greece, to Turkish despotism and oppression. But no one who reads the great work of Gibbon, or the histories of the Greeks by Finlay, can entertain such an idea. All the grand corruptions of Christianity, as viewed by a Protestant, are very much older than the Turkish conquest. The monkery, the idolatry, the fasts and festivals, the miracles, the sacred relics, the excessive ritualism, the spiritual slavery to the priests, and the political slavery to the emperors, all flourished in full vigour under the Byzantine empire many centuries before the Turks settled in Europe, and were at their worst when Mahomet the Second entered Constantinople. Nearly all the same errors and corruptions exist in the Russian Church, which is free from Turkish influence.

Ever since the Turkish conquest, above 400 years ago, the Turkish Government have been singularly tolerant of the Christian Church, far more so than the Roman Church was in France, Spain, or Italy down to

the last century,* with the single exception of apostates from Islam, who were till a late period treated as the Inquisition treated relapsed heretics.

Nevertheless it would appear that the Mohammedan Government has probably made the Greek Church in Turkey worse than it was before the conquest. The Sultans not only turned some of the principal Greek churches into mosques, but are said to have seized a part of the endowments which belonged to the Greek churches, for the benefit of the mosques, and this measure impoverished the Greek clergy, lowered their position in life, and deprived them of a decent education—such schools as the priests can afford in Turkey being little better than our old dame schools.

Another evil consequence of the religion of Islam becoming the religion of the state was to lower the condition and character of the Christians, for most of the upper classes of Greeks, who had some education and social standing, went over by degrees to the state religion, partly to avoid the indignities and insults which they suffered as Christians, and partly induced by the advantageous prospects which it offered to them. If one can trust a most learned and careful historian,

* Whoever doubts this may readily satisfy himself of it by looking into Finlay's 'History of the Greeks under Ottoman Domination,' and Ubicini's 'Letters from Turkey,' vol. ii. Ferdinand and Isabella shut up all the mosques, prohibited the Mohammedan worship, and drove all the Mohammedans out of Spain. Louis the Fourteenth closed all the Protestant churches in France, forbade their worship, took the Protestant children from their parents, and quartered his dragoons upon the Protestant families; so that nearly a million were driven into exile in England, Holland, and other countries. But the Turkish Government allowed the Christians to retain nearly all their churches and to exercise their worship freely, and gave their bishops official powers over their flocks.

the late Mr. Finlay, a very large number were led to turn Mohammedans by the superior moral and social character of the followers of the prophet. For unless we disregard the testimony of a host of travellers, we must believe that the influence of Islamism on the moral character of its followers contrasts with that of Greek superstition very unfavourably to the latter.

The creed of the followers of Mahomet is more simple and free from idolatry; their religious services are more intelligible to the people, and are accompanied by discourses or sermons in the vulgar tongue. They teach that heaven is the reward of good works. The sincere devotion of the Turks is testified by travellers to be at least equal to that of the Greeks, and their worship has more of a rational and less of a mysterious character. Dean Stanley terms it the protestantism of the East. The sobriety and temperance of the Turkish peasant are enforced by the total abstinence of the Koran, and offer a strong contrast to the drunken debauchery of the Russian, Bulgarian, and Roumanian Christians.

The influence of the faith of Islam on the honesty and uprightness of the Turks, has been favourably noticed by many travellers.*

Notwithstanding therefore the ignorance and credulity of the Mohammedan nations, which are accompanied by many gross superstitions, notwithstanding the stupid and fanatical bigotry of the lower orders, which when aroused is fully equal to that of the Greeks, and is from time to time excited by the dervishes, who are a kind of Mohammedan monks and saints, we cannot refuse to give credit to the almost unanimous testimony

* See what Lady Easthope says in Ubcini, ii. 401.

of travellers and residents, that the Mohammedans as a rule, are really devout in their faith, and that it exercises a marked influence on their temperance, honesty, and good faith. But from this partial commendation, the same writers agree in excepting most of the officials who owe their appointments to the corrupt court of Constantinople, as well as a large portion of the Turks in the great cities, who have their full share of the vices of European capitals. And all the world knows that the Turkish Government has every vice that deforms a decayed despotism.

The various circumstances above mentioned are said by the best writers to have gradually drawn over most of the upper and educated classes of the Greeks to the Mohammedan faith, leaving chiefly the poor and the uneducated to practise the ancient rites, with a clergy as poor and as ignorant as themselves. The bishops and archbishops were supplied from a lower rank of society, and were left by the Turkish Government, not only to exercise complete ecclesiastical authority over their Christian followers, but were trusted with a civil jurisdiction over them, enforced by the Turkish officials, and which was exercised in the usual summary and despotic manner. This probably made the yoke of the monks who wore the mitre heavier than it was before. The Turkish Government were also induced by bribes from the monks, some time after the conquest, to sell the great patriarchates for money, a system which has gone on ever since,* and must have prevented any poor but zealous and upright monk from obtaining

* The practice of simony by the bishops was complained of by St. Chrysostom. (Gibbon, vol. iv. 182.)

power in the Church to attempt any purification of it. In fact it corrupted the convents from which all the rulers of the Church came, by directing the ambition of every monk of unusual energy to the accumulation of money in order to buy a bishopric.

To these facts we must add the despair with which the minds of all Christians would be filled at seeing the Crescent openly triumphant over the Cross, some of their finest temples polluted by the followers of the false prophet, their faith daily insulted and treated with contempt, and themselves reduced to a poor, ignorant and despised sect, sinking lower from generation to generation.

There seems therefore, sufficient evidence to prove that Turkish despotism and Mohammedan supremacy have had much to do with the degradation of the Church in Turkey, Greece, and Roumania, to a lower level than it occupied at the conquest.

It by no means follows, however, that if the Turkish power were overthrown in the present contest, and replaced by an independent Christian government, we should see Christianity in Turkey restored to anything like its primitive simplicity. No such consequence has followed as yet in Greece or Roumania since the establishment of their independence. If the Church should become its own master, it is to be feared there is little hope of reform coming from within the Church itself. For a thousand years of slow decay, it has never shown the "vis medicatrix" by which the human body throws off its own disorders, and unless we are wilfully blind to history, it must clearly be remedied by a force from

without. The monkish bishops and prelates will never do it, the papas have no power to do it, and the work must be begun by the State, as Henry VIII. threw off the Papal yoke, and abolished the monasteries, as the Princes of Germany sustained Luther in the work of reformation, and as Peter the Great reformed the monasteries in Russia.

To the State therefore, and to the powerful example and influence of the highly-civilized nations of Western Europe, we must principally look for the reform and purification of the Oriental Church. If that mighty miracle is ever wrought, it will be through their agency. Where this eastern superstition comes in contact with western knowledge and freedom, it catches the healthful contagion, and is already beginning to show significant signs of change: its chiefs are becoming ashamed of its grosser features.

Even in the Russian Church some hopeful signs are visible. The Russian archimandrite, who presided over the Greek Church in London some few years ago, actually admitted to an Englishman the validity of Protestant baptism, and denied that his Church worshipped pictures or prayed to the Virgin!

The beautiful singing in harmony in the Russian Church was an innovation introduced by the patriarch Nikon,* but as yet the Russians cannot tolerate an organ! That divine instrument, whose swelling harmonies have lifted so many devout souls to the gates of heaven, and even softened the Calvinistic hearts of some Scotch divines, is profane to a Greek!

* Stanley, 417.

The late Archbishop of Moscow, Philaret, a prelate of excellent character and unusual abilities, prevailed on the Government to allow the New Testament to be translated into the vulgar tongue and circulated among the people. He also laboured to accomplish a reform in the priesthood, but met with great opposition, and very little success.

The state of the Russian priests is fully described by Mr. Wallace in his recent work,* to which I must refer. It appears to be in general nearly as low as that of the Greek papas in ignorance, poverty, and necessity, and the practice of a mere ritual and ceremonial religion, and to be held in contempt and dislike by the people, allowing of course, many individual exceptions. A hopeful sign, however, is found in the jealousy and dislike of the papas to the monks or black clergy. As to this order, according to Mr. Hepworth Dixon, all men of the higher classes in Russia talk of them as a body of worthless fellows—idle, ignorant, and profligate. Russia, they say, possesses ten thousand monks, and these they would convert into regiments of the line without ceremony. This rancour of the educated classes towards the monks he attributes to the undying hatred of these black clergy to all reforms in Church and State. But he admits that the high places are in their gift, and that the women and ignorant rustics are with them : they have the convents and shrines and relics, which have still the credit of working miracles.

The Russian bishops, however, are said on very good

* 'Russia,' chap. iv.

authority* to be in the most complete dependence on the Government. Indeed the Emperor really appoints and rules the holy synod which governs the Russian Church,† and this very fact offers the best chance of reform. The present Czar, says Mr. H. Dixon,‡ has started the work of reform by throwing open the clerical service to all the world; putting an end to the customary succession of father and son as papas. All the reforms in the Russian monasteries, says Mr. Wallace,§ have been the work of the civil power. He does not, however, expect much improvement in the condition of the National Church. Immobility and passive resistance to external influences, he says, have always been, and are still, her fundamental principles of conduct.

We may add that the most trivial reforms of ritual and ceremonial which were attempted by the patriarch Nikon (A.D. 1652–1684) and by Peter the Great in the Russian Church, were frantically opposed by the clergy, and gave birth to many millions of dissenters, who practise their ancient rites to this day, and have suffered severe persecutions in defence of them. This circumstance compels the Czar to be very cautious in the work of ecclesiastical reform, which must therefore await the progress of education and freedom in Russia.

In the kingdom of Greece, since it became independent of Turkey, they have thrown off their allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and established

* Prince Dolgouroukoff, quoted in 'Revue des deux Mondes' for October, 1867, p. 1049.

† Wallace, ii. 183. ‡ 'Free Russia,' ii. 226. § 'Russia,' ii. 189.

a governing synod of bishops appointed by the king, who is head of the Church.

The Government has also reduced the excessive number of bishops and metropolitans in Greece from upwards of forty to thirty, and has deprived them of their civil jurisdiction, except in cases of marriage and divorce, where it is granted them by the canons of the Greek Church. They are accused by French writers of abusing the power of divorce among the middle and upper classes of the cities; but this evil has not reached the peasantry.

The greatest reform effected since the independence of Greece was the suppression of three-fourths of the convents, the endowments of which were promised to be applied towards providing some education and maintenance for the poor priests. But the necessities of the Government diverted the bulk of them to the purposes of war, and the intrigues of the ministers consumed another portion, so that only a small part of the funds thus obtained was applied in the establishment of schools and a college at Athens, the theological class of which is very scantily attended from the poverty of the people. But there still remain about 110 convents, from the monks of which all the prelates are chosen, and so long as this lasts, the monkish doctrines, fasts, festivals, rites, and superstitions which disfigure the Greek Church are likely to continue. Nothing effectual has been done to raise the condition of the poor priests, and the late minister of the United States at Athens says that ignorance is permitted in the priesthood, because the Church might be endangered

by the discussion of theological dogmas.* Of course they have lost their influence to a large extent among the educated middle and upper classes of Athens and Corfu—a great many of whom do not strictly keep the great fasts, a sure sign of disregard for the customs of the Church. Sermons are now preached on Sundays in some of the churches of Athens and Smyrna, but are jealously watched by the bishops; and the least suspicion of latitude in faith is followed by an interdict from the bishop.†

The Greek metropolitan bishop at Athens told Dr. King a few years ago that his Church had given up the practice of yearly anathematizing those who differ from it, which may be good evidence of his own practice. The Archbishop of Syra, who was in England in 1870, made no scruple on some occasions to attend the services of our Church; but he had studied at German universities, which must be a rare case; and one would like to know what his brother prelates thought of it. Upon the whole it is to be feared there will be no effectual reform in the Greek Church, till the poverty of the Government compels it to abolish the rest of the monasteries and seize their endowments, by which means the monks would be got rid of, and a prospect of promotion assured to the secular clergy, which might induce the educated class to put some of their sons into the Church, as was the case in the days of Basil and Chrysostom. This seems to be the first step necessary in order to raise the condition and character of the clergy.

* Tuckerman, 'The Greeks,' 207.

† Tuckerman, 204.

In Turkey generally it does not appear that the efforts of the Protestant missionaries have been rewarded by much success among the followers of the Greek Church.* From a report made in 1873, by Mr. Hagop Matteosian, the official representative of the Protestant community in Turkey,† it appears that there were altogether 23,000 registered Protestants in Turkey, chiefly in the Asiatic provinces, mostly composed of Armenians. They had in their schools between 5000 and 6000 scholars. The Turkish Government are stated by him to have dealt very liberally towards them, and to have granted them freedom of action for the management of their internal affairs. But the Rev. J. D. Greene speaks in the most desponding terms of the want of success of the missionaries at Smyrna, the second city in the empire, after forty years of labour and preaching, and after issuing millions of copies of the Scriptures and religious books.‡ He says that no organised body of converts appears as the fruit of their labours.

In Bulgaria, which is supposed to contain five or six millions of the Christian subjects of the Porte, most important and promising changes have been made in the last thirty years. Numerous schools have been established in the very district which was the scene of the late massacres, and are well supported by contributions and bequests, and in part by a school-tax. Colonel

* See Ubcini, ii. 392; and Note by Lady Easthope, p. 401.

† 'Church Missionary Record' for 1873, p. 249.

‡ 'Missionary Herald' for 1872, p. 202, Cambridge, Mass.

Baker says the craving for education among the Bulgarian people is very great, and the principal of the Roberts College at Constantinople, Dr. Hamblin, informed him that in his college the Bulgarians had not only taken the lead in numbers over the Greeks and Armenians, but, to his great surprise, in scholarship also. He considers them a race capable of great things.* In these schools, and among the people, books in the Bulgarian language have been introduced and circulated, in spite of the violent opposition of the Greek priests and patriarch, who displayed their true character as the enemies of education, and procured from the Porte the confiscation of all the Bibles and other books.† At last the sanction of the Turkish Government was obtained, and a long agitation then took place among the leaders of the Bulgarians, many of whom had been educated abroad, to regain the ancient independence of their exarch from the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the right to appoint priests speaking the Slavonic tongue, instead of Greek priests using the Greek language, which was generally unintelligible to the Bulgarian Christians. These important rights were, after long-continued efforts, and probably also after a considerable backsheesh, conceded by the Sultan's firman in 1870, and have been since enjoyed by the Bulgarians, notwithstanding the Greek patriarch thundered his excommunication against all who took advantage of them. ‡

* Baker's 'Turkey,' 43.

† Baker, 37-39.

‡ Baker, 55.

Therefore we are not without hopes for Oriental Christianity, when we see the signs of change in the Churches of Bulgaria, Greece, and Russia, and consider the increasing intercourse with Western Europe, and the vivifying influence of western freedom, literature, and civilization. And we will not despair of the future, although Dean Stanley tells us that no reformation of doctrine or philosophy has ever taken place in any branch of the Eastern Church. We will remember that for 800 years our own Church was plunged in darkness, and that nearly three generations passed away after the invention of printing before Luther arose, and the Reformation dawned on England, and the long night of ignorance at last broke up and dispersed.

There is one great fact in favour of the future of the Oriental Church. It is not, like the Roman Church, a power independent of the State, but subordinate to it—and has no infallible Pope at its head, to oppose a “non possumus” to every proposal of improvement. We have shown that in the Russian and the Greek Church the only reforms yet effected have proceeded from the State. Hence the importance of a Christian government to the Turkish Christians. Such a government would have an interest in reforming the Church. If, therefore, the result of the war should be to set up Bulgaria as an independent power, under which six millions of Turkish Christians might find shelter, we should look more hopefully to the future. How this is to be reconciled with English interests in the East, and with due securities against Russian ambition, we must

leave to statesmen to determine. But the friends of humanity and civilization would surely feel greatly relieved if their country could rid itself of any partnership with a despotism which is a curse to so many millions of men.





