

Short Notices.

Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer, M.A. By the Rev. ROBERT SINKER, D.D. With portrait and map. Sixth edition. Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co.

THIS admirable book was commended, by the Rev. W. E. Richardson, in the *CHURCHMAN* of July, 1888. We are pleased to see that in so short a time it has reached a sixth edition. In a brief note to the present edition, Dr. Sinker observes that the welcome accorded to the book is a symptom of the remarkable growth of interest in the cause of Foreign Missions, and marks a wide-spread appreciation of the noble character which he sought to portray. This is very true; but Dr. Sinker's work is remarkably well done. Not a page is dry; not a point is badly put; the presentment of a charming character is graphic and very pleasing. Taken as a whole, we know no memoir so likely to win its way and do a good work among cultured people at the present moment as this, with its masculine common-sense and deep spirituality. The new portrait, we may add, is an improvement.

Sweet Home. By the Rev. J. B. FIGGIS, M.A., Minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Church, Brighton, Author of "Emmanuel," "Homely Homilies," etc. Pp. 158. London: Nisbet and Co.; Brighton: D. B. Friend. 1890.

This is a welcome little work—simple, suggestive, and spiritual—likely to do much good. The esteemed author treats, first, home—its foundation; then home's duties, its dangers, its joys, its sorrows, and so on. He points out the way from home to heaven. There is freshness and force about the whole, and some valuable quotations, prose and poetry, are well placed.

Our Lord's Miracles of Healing Considered in Relation to Some Modern Objections and to Medical Science. By T. W. BELCHER, D.D., D.M., and M.S. With preface by the Right Hon. and Most Rev. R. C. TRENCH, D.D., Lord Archbishop of Dublin. Second edition, revised, enlarged and annotated. Pp. 257. Griffith, Farran, Okeden and Welsh.

Of the first edition of this very able work we have no knowledge, but we gladly welcome and heartily recommend the work as it is now before us. It seems to us of singular value, particularly as regards a certain class of readers. Readable throughout, it bears everywhere marks of most patient inquiry, and also of a judicial temper. We first of all turned to the chapter on Leprosy. Dr. Belcher argues that the "leprosy" which Father Damien so much alleviated in others, and of which he himself died in 1889, was *Elephantiasis Græcorum*, and not the leprosy of the ancients and of Holy Scripture.

Nunnery Life in the Church of England. Seventeen Years with Father Ignatius. By Sister MARY AGNES, O.S.B. Edited, with preface, by the Rev. W. LANCELOT HOLLAND, M.A., Vicar of All Saints, Hatcham. Pp. 200. Hodder and Stoughton.

This is a very curious book. The Editor tells his readers, in a preface, how he became acquainted with ex-Sister Mary Agnes, or Miss J. M. Povey, and how he came to edit and publish her experiences. Mr. Hol-

land also mentions that he had taken "great pains to find out the thorough trustworthiness of her antecedents and statements."

At the age of fifteen, we read, Miss Povey was much impressed at one of Father Ignatius' Missions, and after a time she entered his convent at Feltham. In the tenth year of her life at this convent, a change took place. Father Ignatius, we read, demanded unconditional obedience from the Lady Superior, and she refused to give it. Miss Povey's account runs thus :

Sometimes before breakfast he would order that no one, not even the Reverend Mother, should speak for a whole day, thus causing the utmost confusion, especially among the servants in the kitchen, who were included in the eccentric command, and yet if his own dinner were not properly cooked and served in time he would show great displeasure. Another time, I recollect how he ordered a young and delicate sister, who was very ill and consumptive, to walk barefooted in the snow up and down the garden. . . . Once he intended to bring a young monk, ill from his monastery, to be nursed by a young novice nun, and she was to devote the whole of her time to looking after him. This might have been well enough if we had been Sisters of Charity; but we were enclosed nuns, and were not allowed to see the face of a man, except, of course, our Superior. The Mother would not hear of such a thing, or allow the sick monk to come to the house, as she was sure it would prove an occasion of scandal. She thus set up her will and judgment to oppose Father Ignatius, and she did this on more than one occasion. But at last Father Ignatius boldly asserted that he was quite determined to have nothing but *unconditional obedience*. The Mother and the majority of the nuns in the Feltham Convent refused to accept such an unconditional obedience, and the result was that a split took place.

Father Ignatius dissolved all connection with the rebel nuns, but took the three who were willing to sign his paper to Slapton Convent, in Devonshire. Sister Mary Agnes was one of these three. We read :

It is astonishing to contemplate how absolutely Father Ignatius required us to yield our wills to his will. Whatever he demanded was, he said, distinctly God's will for us, and whatever we did for him was God's will. To use his own oft-repeated words, "It must be so sweet for you to wait upon your Superior, because in so doing you are really waiting upon God; in fact, in waiting upon your Superior, like Martha of old, you are waiting upon the Lord Himself." I can assure my readers that we poor deluded nuns believed in all this.

Some of the statements in this book, we should think, will call forth statements in reply; and we may return to it. Meantime, we repeat, it has, even in these days, an interest of its own. †

We have received from Mr. Murray the new *Quarterly Review*. It is just the volume to put in the portmanteau for a holiday run. There is enough, and the supply is judiciously varied. Amid the many changes in the reading world of this changing time, we are always pleased to see the *Quarterly*, thoroughly up to date, and undeniably of the highest ability, yet free from developments in the way of morality or religion which startle and shock so many who are by no means bigoted or narrow, and do no living creature any good whatever. This summer number is a very good one. "The Emperor Frederick," based on Gustav Freytag's Reminiscences, is interesting throughout, and so is "Sir Robert Walpole," reviewing Mr. John Morley's new book. "Eton College," "Shakspeare's Ghosts, Witches and Fairies," and "The Acropolis of Athens," are ably written. A very timely article, headed "Penny Fiction," is sure to be well read, and the *Quarterly* has done good service in taking up so important a subject. "Mesmerism and Hypnotism," and "Twenty Years of Irish Home Rule in New York," are very readable. "Realism and

Decadence in French Fiction," remarkably clever, ought to be duly considered by critics who repeat the cant phrase about English prudery. We quote the conclusion: "Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Zola, Bourget, Pierre Loti, Daudet, greatly as they differ in character and style, do yet agree in the general resemblance. Negatively, they are not controlled by that reason which discerns the laws of life, morality, and the Divine Presence in the world. Positively, they write under the pressure of passion and instinct. The man they delineate is not a being of large discourse looking before and after; he is *la bête humaine*. . . . Lord Chesterfield, on Christmas Day, 1753, when the Revolution was only murmuring like distant thunder, wrote: 'All the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France.' But 'revolution' is not the word which falls from French lips in our time. There is something beyond revolution; and the Renaus, Bourgets, and Dandets are not slow to pronounce it—the word 'decadence.' A putrescent civilization, a corruption of high and low, a cynical shamelessness meets us at every turn, from the photographs which insult modesty in the shop windows on the Boulevards, and the pornographic literature on the bookstalls, to the multiplication of divorces and the 'drama of adultery' accepted as a social ordinance. What difference of view is there between 'Jacques' and 'Un Disciple,' save that George Sand was a sentimental artist and M. Bourget is a student of psychology? What between 'Sapho' and 'Les Parents Pauvres,' or between 'La Terre' and 'Les Paysans'? And is not Flaubert's disdain of Emma Bovary surpassed by his still deeper disdain of himself? The civilizing bond of the moral law has burst asunder in France; and the whole beast-nature it kept in check is stripping itself of the last shreds of decency that it may go about naked and not ashamed. 'All has ended in the mire, in the abyss of the eternal nothingness,' cries the hero of 'Le Mariage de Loti.' The literature of a nation possessed with that belief has become either a Psalm of Death, or, as M. Renan proves in 'L'Abbesse de Jouarre,' a wild outburst of Epicurean sensuality. With Leopardi it exclaims, 'Omai per l'ultima volta dispera,' or with Baudelaire,

"Resigne-toi, mon cœur; dors ton sommeil de brute.

"The question is whether we are witnessing, not the 'tragedy of a will which thinks,' exemplified in the rejuvenescence of a great nation struggling against adversity, but something at once hideous and beyond all description pitiable, the comedy of *delirium tremens*, of foul dreams and spasmodic efforts, with which M. Zola makes his hero die in 'L'Assommoir.' These are not merely symptoms of revolution; they are prognostics of an intellectual and moral suicide. To find a parallel to modern French literature we must go back to Martial and Petronius. But when Martial and Petronius wrote, society was sinking down into its ashes like a spent fire, suffocating in the stench of its own abominations."

From Mr. Henry Frowde (Oxford University Press) we have received two copies of the Bible with the lessons marked for Church service. Both are useful volumes. The cheaper one, prepared for the S.P.C.K., will doubtless have a very large circulation; the other is tastefully got up and printed on thin paper.

What Cheer, O? is a well-told "Story of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen," by Mr. Alexander Gordon (Nisbet and Co.). It has an introductory note by Mr. T. B. Miller, Chairman of the Mission. There are several good illustrations.