

ART. VI.—THE ARMENIAN CHURCH: ITS PAST
AND ITS PRESENT.

ARMENIA and the Armenians, though little known to most English readers of history or theology, will yet well repay the research of the student in any branch of investigation. The rugged mountain region, forming roughly a circle, the circumference of which touches the Caspian, the Euxine, and the Mediterranean, and embraces the head waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, nurtures a people who claim to be the oldest Aryan race in the world; within their confines somewhere are the cradle of the human race, the site of the Garden of Eden and the resting place of Noah's Ark. Physically, they are superior to most of their neighbours, tall, with fine chiselled features, somewhat fuller than the classical model, and more muscular, as becomes mountaineers, while their women have a reputation throughout the East—not undeserved—for their peerless beauty. So far as a stranger can judge, they possess many of the characteristics of the Scotch and the Swiss. In fact, they are the Swiss of Western Asia. They are thrifty, patient, industrious, intensely devoted to their families, passionately attached to their country, yet always ready to leave it, everywhere retaining their distinctive nationality, while absorbing a large part of the commerce of the East, and surpassing even the Jews in shrewdness and enterprise. They boast of an historical nationality reaching further back than the history of any other people save the Chinese. They were a kingdom when history began; they made alliances and treaties of commerce with China and Persia on the one side, and with Rome in the zenith of her power on the other, and the roll of her monarchs does not close till the end of the 14th century after Christ. Their language is as isolated and peculiar in its structure as that of the Basques, the old Iberians; they have their old ecclesiastical dead language in which exists all their literature, unintelligible to the uneducated; and their modern vernacular. The structure of this language seems further removed from the Greek than any other Aryan tongue, though it certainly belongs to this family, but is like some long shoot which has run up in a straight line from near the base of the main stock, and has sent forth no lateral branches, but during the whole of its lifetime has remained distinct. While most peculiar in its structure, the Armenian has borrowed names and words freely from the Zend and all the surrounding tongues. Many words from the Zend are retained, while lost in the original tongue. But none of these accretions have in any degree modified the structure of the language.

Thus race, language, religion, as well as country have combined to keep the Armenians a distinct and marked people. Yet their fate has been that of Poland. They are the Poles of the East. Like the Poles, they lost province after province, the western ones falling to Turkey, Kurdistan to Persia, Circassia and the whole of Georgia ultimately to Russia. There has been a tripartite partition, by these three powers, in which Russia has absorbed nearly two-thirds of the kingdom, Turkey almost a third, and Persia much less than a third. But this annihilation of Armenia, except as a geographical expression, has not shaken or affected the union of the race ; of whom, according to their own accounts, there are eight millions. Can we wonder that a people whose nationality has been so completely suppressed, while the fire of patriotism burns fiercely in their breast, should cling with the intensest devotion to their national church, round which are clustered their whole literature, all the proud memories of their history ; and should be ready to sacrifice anything rather than the distinctive features of that church ? What link, what tie, either with their past history, or with their fellow countrymen, can they have except that of their old historic church ?

Ecclesiastically we may look on that Church as the "Ultima Thule" of the East. It is true that primitive Christianity spread at a very early period beyond the Euphrates into Persia, but it was soon crushed by paganism and fire-worship, and was finally exterminated by the Sassanidæ in the fourth century. But it never lost its hold on Armenia, though, as primitive Roman Christianity in our own country was driven into Wales, so for a short time the Gospel light in Armenia glimmered only in the inaccessible valleys round Ararat. In this, as in many other particulars, there is a remarkable parallel between the histories of the English and Armenian churches. Both were re-planted, and the resuscitation of Armenian Christianity by Gregory the Illuminator, A.D. 301, has many points of resemblance with the mission work of Cuthbert and his predecessors in the north, and Augustine and Paulinus in the south of England. As the English church long resisted the encroachments of Rome, so for centuries the Armenians held out against the superstitions of her Greek neighbours. Both churches claim, in the first instance, an Apostolic founder, and the claim of the Armenians to have received the Gospel from Thaddæus and St. Thomas seems to rest on an historical basis.

For, with whatever legendary accretions the tradition may have been invested, it is impossible to disprove, and difficult to doubt, the statements corroborated both by Armenian and Greek authorities. We all know the legend of Abgarus, King of Armenia, his letter to Christ, and the fable of the handker-

chief sent in response, which retained the impression of the Saviour's features. Now, that Abgarus should have heard of the fame of Jesus is more than probable. The seat of his kingdom was at Edessa, the ancient Ur of the Chaldees, and now again known as Oorfa. At that period, it must be borne in mind, the Armenian kingdom had pushed to the southward, and although Edessa is geographically in Mesopotamia, its king was the recognized monarch of southern Armenia, or rather had transferred thither his seat of government, the spurs of the Taurid mountain range coming down to within two days' journey of the place. The Armenians claim that the Greeks, who came to Philip just before the feast, wishing to see Jesus, were the delegates of King Abgarus, and this is quite in accord with the long account given by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.* i. 13) of the mission of Abgar, overlaid though it be with fable. We must not forget that the historian very categorically asserts the existence of inscriptions attesting the mission to Christ, down to his day at Edessa. Nor, when we consider the constant commercial intercourse between that part of the Euphrates valley and Syria, the high state of civilization, and the travelling propensities of the Armenian race, need we be surprised to find them hearing so soon of the great Teacher who had arisen in Judea ; especially as we learn from other sources that Abgar had sent an embassy into Syria to the Roman General Marinus to deprecate some suspicions of Tiberius of his having intrigued with Persia.

But soon after the death of Abgar (and we are now on historic ground), the infant church was assailed by continuous persecution, stimulated chiefly by Persia. Still the light was never utterly extinguished, and when Gregory the Illuminator, the great patron saint and founder of the present Armenian Church arose, he found the soil prepared, and the 7,000 in Israel ready to come forth and avow their faith. He had been saved from the massacre of his family when an infant, and was baptized, educated, ordained and married in Cæsarea of Cappadocia. He baptized Tiridates III., founded the cathedral of Etchmiadzin, still the religious metropolis of Armenia ; and, like our own Bede, devoted many years of his life to the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular of his nation. Tiridates, and the nobles of his kingdom, proclaimed, at Edessa, Christianity to be the religion of Armenia. The date of this national profession of Christianity is disputed, some Armenian authorities placing it as early as A.D. 276, which is manifestly too early, the more probable epoch being A.D. 302, when Gregory was consecrated by the Bishop of Cæsarea, to the See of Armenia, the present Armenian Orders being thus derived from the Greek. But whatever the exact date, the boast of the Armenians must be

admitted to stand on indisputable grounds, that theirs was the first nation which ever made a public profession of Christianity, and adopted it as the religion of the State; for this national re-conversion occurred, at latest, several years before Constantine emblazoned the Cross on the banners of the Roman Empire.

The Patriarchate, or rather the Katholicate of St. Gregory, descended to his two sons in succession, and thence to two of his grandsons, one after the other. Many and marvellous are the traditions of the Armenians as to the labours and sufferings of Gregory. It was one of his sons who attended the Council of Nicæa to represent his church, in A.D. 325, and to him also is ascribed the invention of the Armenian alphabet, the Syriac characters having been previously used; but this change was really much later, about A.D. 400, by St. Isaac. Gregory accepted at once the Nicene Creed, which is in daily use in his liturgy, with the anathema appended, but before which stands a rubric—"Thus far the symbol of faith." He added, also, what is called "the Confession of St. Gregory," always recited after the Creed, and to which the Armenians attach great importance. "And we also glorify Him Who was before all worlds: we worship the Holy Trinity and the one Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now and for ever, world without end—Amen." The tradition of the Uniat Armenians, that St. Gregory visited Rome, does not seem to rest on any historical basis.

Again, the fires of persecution tried the Armenian Church through the tyranny of the conquering Sassanian dynasty of Persia. During this troublous epoch, the most conspicuous name in the ecclesiastical annals is that of St. Isaac. One thing was secured by the Persian domination, the complete independence of the Armenian Church from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. During this period also was held the Council of Chalcedon, the decrees of which have never been accepted by the Armenian Church, which has consequently been deemed by most orthodox writers to be heretical and to have adopted the monophysite heresy.

But, as I have often heard Armenian ecclesiastics earnestly plead, at the time of the sitting of that Council, A.D. 451, their country was in such a state of intestine convulsion, consequent on the Sassanian invasions, that the attendance of their bishops was impossible; that as a matter of fact they were never summoned; that, from their ignorance of Greek, they could have been of little use there; and that finally the refusal of the Armenians to receive the decree of Chalcedon is simply based on their maintenance of the great principle that no Church can be called on to accept as binding on her the decrees of a Council in which she was not represented, and that, so far as Armenia is concerned, the Council of Chalcedon was not œcumenical. They deny,

however, any rejection of the doctrines laid down by that Council. This denial is scarcely borne out by facts; for though at first the Armenians declined to receive the decrees, as being contrary to the anti-Nestorian declarations of Ephesus, and persisted in their refusal when, ten years afterwards, the Archimandrite Barsumas sent a delegate to urge their acceptance; yet thirty years later the national Armenian Council went further than this, and in A.D. 491 anathematized the Council of Chalcedon. The question whether the Gregorian Church (as the old Armenian is rightly called) does hold the Eutychian heresy, may, so far as we know from her formularies, be answered in the negative:—that practically the educated clergy do so absorb the manhood in the Godhead, as to lose sight of the sacrificial character of redemption, so far as an outsider, unable to converse with them in their native language, can ascertain, is true. But, so far as any dogmatic declarations go, the commonplace charge of heresy, so glibly uttered by Greek and Roman partisans against *all* the ancient independent churches of the East, is in this case at least, without sufficient proof. Because Armenia rejects the authority of a Council, that is not to say she affirms the doctrine condemned by that Council. Various other charges of heresy have been brought, one, *e.g.*, because the national Council of Tiben, A.D. 535, interpolated into the “*Ter Sanctus*,” in the Liturgy, the words “who was crucified for us,” as applied to all the persons of the Holy Trinity. But this interpolation does not appear in Malan’s translation of the Liturgy, nor in Dr. Neale’s, nor in Langlois, and Armenian prelates have assured me the charge is without foundation. Yet there can be no doubt that the Council of Tiben did introduce the words. The other items of indictment on the score of heresy are, the keeping of Christmas on the day of the Epiphany, the use of unleavened bread and of wine unmixed with water in the Eucharist. These latter will weigh but little with English Churchmen. In the main, the Armenian Church holds, and has ever held fast, the great verities of the Christian faith.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy of Armenia is peculiar. The highest title, that of *Katholicos*, has no parallel in any other church. There are two *Katholici*, of Etchmiadzin and of Sis, the northern and southern provinces. There are also Patriarchs at Constantinople and Jerusalem, but these are rather civil and political, than spiritual dignitaries, and are later additions, induced by the national circumstances of the Armenian people. A Patriarch cannot consecrate a *Katholicos*, but must be consecrated by a *Katholicos*. Their archbishops are numerous, as in the Greek Church, and have all the spiritual prerogatives of their ecclesiastical superiors. There are at present nineteen archbishops, most of whom have from two to six dependent

bishops in the towns of their province, but the succession of individual Sees has not been preserved with the same care as in the Greek or Roman Churches.

From the period of the final separation of the Armenian from the other Oriental Churches, its annals are scanty in the extreme. For centuries pressed politically between the upper and nether millstones of Persian and Tartar on the one side, and the Ottoman on the other; ecclesiastically, between the ruthless persecution of Mohammedanism, and the bitter and intriguing enmities of the Greek and Latin Churches, the story of Armenia is one long tale of suffering and oppression, borne with indomitable endurance. The libraries of Etchmiadzin and Sis contain many manuscripts which have never been printed, nor even read by any Western scholar. The Greeks laboured with but indifferent success to induce the Armenians to observe their ritual and observances, until the advent of the Crusaders opened a field for Romish aggression.

The Armenian kingdom had gradually but steadily been pushed from its northern fastnesses to the southern slopes of the Taurid, until in the twelfth century it comprised little more than the ancient province of Cilicia, with Marash as its metropolis. Attacked by the Ottomans politically, and by the Greek Empire both politically and ecclesiastically, the King, Rupen II., and the Patriarch Gregory, took the fatal step of invoking help from Rome, A.D. 1184. The Papal Court made no definite promise, but never lost an opportunity of dangling hopes of assistance on condition of submission to the claims of Papal supremacy. The astuteness of Rome was so far rewarded, that on the Pope's pledge to use his influence with Spain, Genoa, and Venice—then the great commercial powers in the East—several very important changes were made in the Armenian ritual, which up to this epoch had remained the most primitive and purest of all the liturgies of Christendom. We have no trace of the worship of images or eikons before this date, nor of the insertion of the Virgin's name as a co-mediator, nor of invocation of her or of saints. The doctrines of purgatory and of transubstantiation also now appear for the first time in the Armenian Church. But on one point the Armenians remained firm. They would not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, and consequently, when Rome found she could gain no more, she threw off the mask, and abandoned the hapless victims to their fate. An historian, certainly not prejudiced against the Church of Rome, briefly passes over this period with the remark, that in these transactions the proceedings of the Roman Court will not bear investigation.

But the efforts of Rome were successful in creating a schism which remains to the present day. Vast numbers of Armenians

had left their country, perpetually harassed and devastated by invading hordes, and had settled in the seaboard towns of the Levant and elsewhere, where they proved most successful traders. These the Dominicans laboured, not without success, to detach from their national church, offering the protection of Spain and Venice to all who would recognize the supremacy of the Pope, with the concession that they should retain their own orders, the marriage of their clergy, and the use of the Armenian liturgy, modified and interpolated to meet the requirements of Rome. Shall we wonder that men bereft of a country, homeless in the world, should accept the offer? Hence arose what is called the Church of the Uniat Armenians, now numbering about 150,000 souls, very few of whom, however, are to be found in the country itself, but chiefly among the emigrants on the Mediterranean seaboard. The headquarters of this schism, for some time fixed at Modan, in the Morea, then Venetian territory, were removed, in A.D. 1715, to the island of Lazaar, close to Venice, where they still remain, under the name of Mechitarists, from their founder, Mechitar. Here is the only Armenian press of any importance, and to this convent of schismatic Uniat, the Gregorian Church of Armenia is still chiefly indebted for all its literature. The liturgy used by the Uniat, and first printed at Rome, now at Venice, is full of Romish interpolations, as may be seen in Malan's translation; but I have frequently found Venetian printed liturgies in use in Gregorian churches, professing to be those of the old Gregorian rite, yet incorporating many Romish additions. So ignorant are many of the native priesthood, that they do not discriminate at all between the various editions, orthodox and corrupted.

But the efforts of Rome did not cease with the Uniat schism. Leo VI., the last King of Armenia, had married a princess of Hungary, and, attacked by the Egyptian Khalif, a last effort was made to secure western aid on any terms. While the Armenians hesitated to yield to the absolute demands of Rome, the country was overrun and Leo captured, A.D. 1375, and his kingdom was finally destroyed. After several years of captivity he was released, retired to Europe, became reconciled to the Pope, and finally died an exile in Paris, whither he had gone to seek aid in liberating his country, in 1393.

From that date the history of Armenia resolves itself simply into the lists of its Katholici. The Turks, into whose hands the fruits of the Egyptian conquests soon fell, left the Armenians the free exercise of their religion, subject only to the extortion of large bribes on the appointment of their Patriarchs and chief Ecclesiastics, whose election must be ratified by the Porte. But meantime the whole of northern Armenia had become absorbed by Russia, and the well-known machinations of the Muscovite

power have made greater inroads on the Gregorian adherents than all the violent outbreaks of Moslem fanaticism.

The Armenian Church, isolated, despoiled, and oppressed, had sunk at the commencement of the present century into a state of ignorance and poverty equalled in the case of no other church except the Nestorian Jacobites. She was without the means of educating her clergy, excepting at the small convents of Etchmiadzin and Sis; and the Armenians have never had nuns, and have shown little taste for monasticism, the only monasteries they possess being simply educational colleges. They possessed no printing presses, and for their theological teaching were much at the mercy of the Uniats of Venice. So absolute was their dependence, that it is said, though I cannot vouch for its truth, that copies of the liturgy, with the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son inserted in the Creed, have been found in use in Gregorian churches.

Since Armenia has ceased to have a national existence, had it not been for the wonderfully strong hold maintained on the race by its national Church, it must have become completely absorbed among its great and Moslem neighbours. Yet such is the power of that Church, that while there is no people except the Jews so universally dispersed as the Armenians, from China westward to America, yet nowhere have they lost their nationality, or been absorbed among the people where they sojourn.

We cannot have these facts too strongly impressed upon us, if we are to take a just view of the present and future of the Armenian Church, its attitude towards reform and towards Protestant missions; and the previous pages of historical resumé are really necessary in order that we may grasp the peculiar position. The struggles of the last four centuries may be passed over as, in this regard, unimportant.

The first direct effort to do anything to aid the Armenian Church in reformation, was made by the Basle missionaries in 1821, when they obtained the permission of the Russian Government to visit Russian-Armenia and Georgia. They extended their researches into Persian Armenia, and the story of their labour at Shamakhi and Shoosha is most interesting. Their only object at first was the evangelization of the Moslems, but finding them inaccessible, they listened to requests of the Armenians, who urged, "Why do you pass us by, and go to the Moslems. Come to our aid; establish schools for us." This they did for a time with most cheering results. Their object was not to proselytize, but to enlighten. In their own words, "to direct all their labours, in enlightening and reforming the Armenians, to the simple point of bringing them to be coadjutors

in the great work of converting the Mohammedans." They aimed "to enlighten the Armenian Church without drawing away its members, and for this end to lay the fundamental doctrines of redemption by Jesus Christ, justification by faith alone, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, simply and clearly before individuals as often as opportunity should present." In this spirit the Basle Mission did a great preparatory work, both educational and by the circulation of the Scriptures, to which it must be remembered the Armenian Church has no objection, for it is to Scripture, of which they hold the Church, to be the witness and keeper, and not to the Church, that they refer as the ultimate arbiter in all matters of faith.

Thus the ground was in no small degree prepared when, in 1830, the American Board of Missions took up the work, which they have since carried on with a vigour and an employment of resources, and, we may also add, with a success scarcely paralleled elsewhere in missionary annals. But what were the views and principles of Dr. Eli Smith and Dr. Dwight, the pioneers of that mission? In their own words—

So many barriers are set up by prejudice against foreign influence, that neither foreign missionaries alone, nor converts who have united with them, and thus come to be viewed as foreigners and apostates, can hardly expect to effect the entire reformation of the Armenian Church. The work must be done by enlightened persons rising up from the midst of the Church itself; and the greater the amount of light that is diffused through the nation before it is attempted, the more sure and complete will be the result. The missionary, therefore, instead of aiming to make proselytes to his own communion, although he may receive individuals who wish, or are forced, to come, should shape his measures so as to draw as few as possible.

Would that the Mission had been carried on always in this spirit!

The American Congregationalist Mission has steadily increased and expanded its operations. It has now in the Armenian country six important central stations, Aintab, Marash, Harpoot, Mardin, Van, and Erzeroom. It has good educational establishments at Marash, and I believe at other centres, and a noble college at Aintab, with a strong and able staff, there being a medical department also attached, the value of which is simply inestimable to the natives. They have many congregations, some of them self-supporting. But all these are entirely drawn from the Gregorian Church. There is no direct effort whatever made by them against Mohammedanism, and though largely supported by the Society called, by a strange misnomer, the *Turkish* Missions Aid Society, the Turks are not looked on as within the scope of their work. The missions have practically become exclusively missions for drawing Oriental Christians

into Congregationalism. No one will for a moment deny that they have done a great work, both in quickening spiritual life, and, above all, educationally. But there can be no doubt the work would have been much greater, had a spirit of toleration been cultivated; had the prejudices of the Orientals been considered; and had it been carried on in a more large-hearted spirit. It is for want of this that no impress worth speaking of has been made on the members of the Oriental churches. The door of friendly intercourse with Greek, Armenian, and Syrian prelates, which is still quite open to English churchmen, is closed to the Americans. Nor can this be wondered at, when episcopacy, the use of a liturgy, the wearing of surplices and stoles is inveighed against with the same vehemence as Mariolatry, and the Church of England denominated the half-way-house. To the fact that the Presbyterian American Missions in Syria have adopted a much more catholic tone, may be ascribed the more friendly feeling towards them entertained by all Oriental Christians, except of course the Latins.

Those readers who have weighed the above summary of Armenian Church History will surely at once appreciate, ay, and sympathize with, the intense devotion of Armenians to their own ecclesiastical system, and the importance of any effort at reformation being made *on their own lines*. That they are not averse to reformation is certain. The eagerness with which they all seize on opportunities for education, their natural intelligence, the frank way in which the leaders of their hierarchy welcome English aid, ay, and guidance, in endeavouring to secure higher education; the fact that their Church places no obstacles on the diffusion of Scripture, that they are not hampered by monastic or other religious orders; that they acknowledge that many of the parts of their system against which we protest were forced upon them by Rome in the darkest hour of their country's need; all these things facilitate reformation. That they need reformation is surely as evident to every English churchman who will stand by the principles of his own reformation. The invocation of saints as mediators, the adoration and invocation of the Virgin, the teaching of purgatory, the practice of masses for the dead, the adoration of eikons, the practical teaching of transubstantiation, the employment of a dead and unknown tongue in all their public services—these things, if not all incorporated as articles of faith into their formulas, are all held in practice. To quote the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury—"I cannot understand how any one who holds the doctrines of the English Reformation, and is grateful for the work of our Reformers, can withhold his sympathy from a movement for the reformation of the Armenian Church."

And such a movement there is at present. About sixteen years ago Martyn Migherditch, Armenian Archbishop of Aintab and Vice-Katholikos of the Convent of Sis, was referred to for information by some of his own people, who had got into controversy with the American Protestants. By the direction of the Patriarch, he accepted a challenge from the latter to defend the dogmas of invocation of the Virgin and of the saints and purgatory. In order to support his views, he began to study carefully the Word of God, and found to his grief and horror that the Americans were right and he was wrong. He frankly stated his difficulties to the Patriarch, but the only advice he received was to trust his Church, and to remember that he was likely to succeed to the Katholicate. At this time he knew nothing of the Church of England, he had only heard of it as one among many Protestant sects. For three years he remained in a state of painful mental conflict, but at length he determined for truth's sake to abandon his ecclesiastical dignities and to retire into private life. There were parts of the Congregational system from which he shrank, especially the rejection of episcopacy, the disuse of a liturgy and all forms of prayer, and their restriction of infant baptism to the children only of those few who were admitted by the missionaries into full communion. About this time he heard of some of his people who were meeting in private and using a service-book of which they had become possessed. It seems that a missionary of the Jews' Society, travelling to Hamadan, had left behind him a Turkish version of the English Prayer Book. This had come into the possession of those Armenians who had been educated in the mission schools, but would not leave the Church of their fathers. This book he borrowed and studied. It supplied the need he felt; and as he had been compelled to quit his dignities, because he insisted on using the vernacular in public worship, he at once adopted this book, until such time as he could have a translation of St. Gregory's liturgy, purged from the Romish interpolations of the fourteenth century. But now the ecclesiastical authorities commenced a severe persecution and refused to listen to all terms of compromise. He was then led to apply to Bishop Gobat of Jerusalem for intercommunion and recognition. After frequent communication with him, he went to Constantinople, and had much personal intercourse with the Rev. Dr. Köelle, the well-known missionary to the Moslems, who more fully instructed him in the doctrines of the Church of England. Finally, he was received into intercommunion by Bishop Gobat, signing the "Thirty-nine Articles" as his provisional confession of faith (excepting such only as are of a local character), until such time as the Gregorian Church shall have reformed her own doctrines and practices in accordance

with God's Word. He has ever since maintained his position, and about 300 of the Armenians in Aintab have continued steadfast in their attachment to his ministrations. The late Bishop Gobat, to the day of his death, generously maintained the Archbishop, and supplied him with the necessaries of life from funds at his disposal. By the generous aid of the late Rev. W. Newton, Vicar of Rotherham, a central site for a church for the Archbishop was secured in Aintab, for the erection of which a firman was, after three years' delay, granted by the Porte, and the walls of which have, through funds recently collected, been raised to the wall plate. But the progress of the building is now arrested by the exhaustion of all available funds. The site is vested in trustees—viz., the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., J. McGregor, Esq., and the writer; and the deeds deposited in the Archives of the Embassy at Constantinople. By these the building is confined to the use of those in *Armenian* orders, using either the liturgy of the Church of England, or such liturgy of the Armenian Church as is in harmony with its teaching. The great object is to present to the thousands of Armenians who are dissatisfied with the superstitions of their own Church, but value its Catholic usages and traditions, a type of what a reformed, yet Catholic, Orthodox Church, may be, without ceasing to be Armenian.

The death of Bishop Gobat, and so soon afterwards of his like-minded successor, Bishop Barclay, and also of Mr. Newton, have deprived Archbishop Migherditch of almost the only friends he had left, who knew, by personal observation, the state of ecclesiastical affairs in Southern Armenia; and meanwhile he is left absolutely destitute, save for such a pittance as the writer has been able from time to time to remit to him. His own people are all of the poorest—hand-loom weavers and labourers.

Meantime, the movement for a Reformed Armenian Church has spread with marvellous rapidity. Nothing has contributed more to its success than the circulation of an edition of the Prayer Book of the Church of England, translated by the Archbishop himself into the Turkish vernacular of Southern Armenia, and printed in the Armenian character, the only character read by the people. This was printed in 1880 by the S.P.C.K., and most munificently presented at the sole cost of that venerable Society. A similar grant of Bibles has been made by the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The writer made a lengthened visit to the country last year, and found congregations or groups of adherents in almost every one of the twenty or thirty towns he visited. Not only did he find Armenian priests using our Prayer Book out of church, and even reading the scriptural lessons in church in the vernacular, but he found a yearning among many of the native Protestant con-

gregations for a reunion with a Reformed Church of their fathers. Several Protestant pastors had earnestly sought episcopal orders from Archbishop Migherditch, and some were using our Prayer Book. At the same time a new danger is assailing Armenia. No less than 400 French ecclesiastics of the various orders expelled from France have betaken themselves to Asiatic Turkey, and are already spread through Syria, Asia Minor, Armenia, and Mesopotamia, studying the languages, and preparing themselves for an onslaught on Oriental Christianity, reformed and unreformed alike.

The evidence that there is a widespread and deep-seated desire throughout the whole Armenian Church for reformation on the lines of the Church of England is absolutely overwhelming. And this movement needs only to be judiciously fostered in order to produce vast results at no very distant day.

Exception was taken by some of the American missionaries to any sympathy shown by English Churchmen to the native and national reformers, on the ground that it would be an intrusion into their field. In reply, the promoters of the movement have repeatedly and emphatically repudiated any desire to interfere with the Americans in their work; but can they turn a deaf ear to the cry of thousands yearning for light, but who, having had the congregational system before them for years, determinedly decline to accept it? As Churchmen, they would be false to their principles if they repelled these people; as Reformed Churchmen they would be equally false, if they bid them be content to rest in superstition, so long as the Gregorian Church practises the worship of images, the adoration of the Blessed Virgin, the invocation of saints, the adoration of relics; teaches the doctrines of purgatory and of transubstantiation, and offers animal sacrifices.

Independent testimony to the truths of the statements already published have come in from all quarters. H.B.M. Consul at Aleppo, Mr. Henderson, writes that the movement is "real, spontaneous, indigenious, and rapidly spreading." And again, "I hope you will succeed in getting a large subscription, and that two or three assistants may be sent out from England, who could have the protection of British subjects."

Mr. Hormuzd Rassam writes to the *Times*, 25th of October, 1881: "Of course all Armenians and other Christian sects in Turkey prefer the Episcopalian principles, but hitherto no Anglican Society has extended to them the hand of fellowship."

The Bishop of Gibraltar admits in a letter to the *Morning Post*, dated 11th of February, 1882: "There is a singular concurrence of independent movement on the part both of the Greeks and the Armenians towards the English Church."

Mr. Morrison, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible

Society, in writing from Tiflis to Dr. Tristram in confirmation of his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, encloses a letter from G. J. Zarian, of Diarbekir, whom he knows, and whom, along with Mr. Carapet (ordained by Bishop Gobat), he speaks of as having "favourably impressed him as earnest truthful men."

Zarian writes from Diarbekir to Mr. Morrison—

You will be very glad to hear the news of the prosperity of the Gospel and progress of our Church. Especially in these days we see superstitious people being converted day by day unto the true and Christian right way; many are ready to leave all their superstitious and wrong doctrines and join our Church. In a special manner, the Armenians and Syrians in our country prefer the Episcopal Church more than any other Protestant Church which has no episcopal order or institution for its establishment. Our Church can take large paces in advance, but unfortunately it is in want of assistance, and has no sufficient means to manage all wants of its progress. Now there is more progress than before. Every Sunday our chapel is full of Armenians, Syrians, and Roman Catholics. Many people are now awakened from their sleep, and come to hear the preaching of the Word of God. Last Sunday, two men, two youths, and a woman were added to the number of our membership, and became partakers of the Holy Communion. Our school has twenty-five boys, who are learning reading, writing, and Christian education; but our work is imperfect while we are outside the care of any mission society or bishopric. We have no power and assistance to keep both the school and church, and the other necessities which favour the progress of the Church. . . . In these days, there are also Church movements both in our city and in neighbouring towns. A week ago we received two letters, one from Mosul, the other from Mardin, fifteen hours distant. These letters ask for assistance from our Church. We did what we could. We sent them Prayer Books and Bibles; we gave them instructions how to conduct Divine service according to the Prayer Book, and we advised and encouraged them to continue in that manner. . . . Please to mention our Church, and present it to our episcopal brethren, who will have sympathy and love for Christ's Church in Diarbekir, so that through their favour many people may enjoy the same Christian blessings which they have, "that we all of one mind may hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace."

The following extracts are from a letter to Dr. Tristram, from the native pastor of the self-supporting congregation of Oorfa (Ur of the Chaldees):—

There is a new danger coming out. When we look at it as men of reason, it seems as though it would swallow up the whole of the Gospel work in this country.

The Jesuits, 400 of whom, when excluded from France, turned to Asia Minor, are learning Oriental languages, especially Armenian. In a short time they will make their stations in the chief cities of Turkey, and by their enormous expenditure and their instructions

they will convert the people to Popery. How can a man of reason believe that such a feeble and superficial Congregationalism will be able to stand against this gigantic enemy?

We are exceedingly sorry to say that, with a very few exceptions, neither the native pastors nor the missionaries have any depth of knowledge of Armenian literature and ecclesiastical constitution. On the contrary, they abuse the Armenian language, and try to make profane Turkish the theological and literary language for the Armenian Christians. Their secret resolve is by this means entirely to separate the Armenian Protestants in their ecclesiastical and national relations from their great stock.

Another thing, which is a sadder, though more absurd, matter, is that the Episcopal Church is explained by the missionaries to be a Popish Church. From this it is clearly seen that these persons are ignorant of Church History, and of the fact that the Episcopal Church is the greatest branch of the Reformed Church.

We cannot understand the reason why the noble English nation has not before now largely begun her missionary work in this country, for it is more than evident that the English nation is much loved in Oriental countries, both for her national and ecclesiastical character, and there are many educated persons who are ready to help the work, and they wait in that hope.

The following are extracts from a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury by Mr. Boyajian, the well-known native pastor of Diarbekir:—

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—In the interview which your Grace favoured me with at Addington, last August, I promised at your request to write concerning the movement among the Armenians towards the adoption of the system of the Church of England. After leaving England I have been constantly travelling, and so occupied in various ways, that I have had no time to fulfil my promise, and for this I beg to offer to your Grace my sincere apology.

With regard to the movement, while in Constantinople, I met several clergymen, amongst them a bishop, the most learned and enlightened of the Armenians, who were very anxious that the Churchmen in England should assist in the introduction of the Church of England formula among the people, and they have assured me that the great mass of the Armenians will be most ready to adopt it.

In the interior the case is the same. There are already communities in connection with the English Church at Aintab, Marash, and elsewhere, formed under the care of Bishop Migherditch.

Since my arrival here, which is about six weeks, I have received letters from Bitlis and Kharpoot, telling me that there are several hundred families among Armenians in those places who are Protestants in heart, but decline to adhere to the American missionaries on account of their Church policy (Congregationalism), being earnestly desirous of union with the Church of England, and they have appealed to me either to send them some one, or to go myself, to guide, advise, and admonish them. There is also another appeal from Mar-

din, a large town to the south of Diarbekir. Thus, your Grace will see that the statement of Canon Tristram is not a fiction, but rather within than beyond the limit of the true state of the case. I am very anxious that something should be done to forward this movement, which I seriously consider to be for the highest benefit of the Armenians. . . .

The Armenians generally are inclined to the reformed form of Christianity, but not to Congregationalism. *The Church of England system is the most suitable to them, and I believe that its introduction will cause the reformation of the Armenian Church at a not far distant time.*

The above-mentioned appeals are sent to me on account of my connection with England, and they know how strongly I favour and advocate this great work; but I know not how to help it effectually, for, as your Grace may remember my telling you, I am the pastor of a large Protestant community here, who, though independent of missionaries, still keep the form of the Church organized by them; nevertheless, the majority are in strong sympathy with the Church of England. I intend for the present to write and admonish those who appeal for help, promising to lay their desire before your Grace.

With such evidence before them, the committee, recently formed to carry out this work,¹ confidently appeal to the sympathies of all members of the Church of England, who are attached to the principles of the Reformation, to aid them, 1st. In completing the still roofless church of St. Gregory at Aintab. 2nd. In affording assistance to Archbishop Migherditch. 3rd. In sending out immediately two clergymen—one to be a means of communication with England, to be with the Archbishop at Aintab, to assist in organization, and generally to exercise a directing and controlling influence. Such an one it is believed is willing to go—one, whose name and qualification would at once commend him as eminently fitted for the work. The other is needed as an itinerant preacher, to visit the towns and villages, and to look after the congregations where there is either no reforming Armenian priest, or none capable of preaching. This one, too, is ready, in Rev. A. Garbooshian, himself an Armenian by birth, and a Cambridge graduate, whose chaplaincy in Cyprus, under the Colonial and Continental Society, has been lately suspended for want of funds, and who earnestly desires to devote himself to work among his countrymen. He can preach in Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic, and is in the full vigour of youth. It would indeed be a mistake to let slip such an opportunity.

English Churchmen have contributed many thousands of pounds to the American Congregationalist Mission, through the

¹ The trustees of the fund are the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. F. E. Wigram, Hampstead, Rev. Canon Tristram, D.D., Durham, Hon. Sec.

Turkish Missions Aid Society, and otherwise. Is it too much to ask that when the aid of their own Church is invoked, and there is a fair prospect of reforming the most ancient and venerable of the churches of the East, the response should be prompt?

The sum of £1,000 a-year would meet all demands. The case comes under the purview of no existing society. There is no time to be lost, for the harvest is fully ripe.

H. B. TRISTRAM.

Short Notices.

The Pulpit Commentary.—Deuteronomy. Exposition, by the Rev. W. L. ALEXANDER, D.D., Editor of Kitto's "Biblical Cyclopædia;" Homiletics, by the Rev. C. CLEMANCE, B.A., D.D.: Homilies by various Authors. Pp. 580. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. 1882.

IN reviewing several volumes of "The Pulpit Commentary," edited by Canon Spence, and the Rev. Joseph Exell, we have readily done justice to the work, as almost unique; admirably planned, and carried on with ability, reverent care, and good judgment. The volume now before us merits hearty praise. The Introduction by Dr. Alexander is exceedingly good; and of the exposition, homiletics, and homilies, so far as we have examined, we can write with confidence. Here and there, in the exposition, occur some specially choice paragraphs; but the whole is clear, forcible, and fresh. The book is a big one; in some respects, perhaps, too big; but from many teachers, at all events, there will be no complaint on this score. Full and suggestive, it is a valuable Commentary. The printing, on good paper, is excellent.

In his Introduction, Dr. Alexander replies to Dr. Robertson Smith. We quote a specimen passage of his able argument:—

The aspect and attitude of the writer, both retrospective and prospective, are those of one in the position of Moses at the time immediately before the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. . . . These allusions are so numerous and precise that it may with justice be said, "If Deuteronomy is not the work of Moses, there is here the most exquisite of literary frauds, and that in an age which had not as yet acquired the art of transporting itself into foreign individualities and situations" (Hengstenberg).

The passage just quoted suggests a weighty consideration in favour of the Mosaic authorship of this book. If the book is not by him, if it is the production of a later age, it must be regarded as a forgery. For beyond all question, the book not only contains discourses alleged to have been uttered by Moses, but also claims to have been written by him (cf. ch. i. 1; xxix. 1; xxxi. 1, 9—11, 24). Are we, then, to pronounce this book a forgery? If so, the book cannot be regarded as one of the *ιερά γράμματα*, the sacred writings—as really belonging to the *γραφὴ Θεόπνευστος*, as being a book given by Divine inspiration. For the religious consciousness recoils from the thought that God would either originate or sanction a deliberate untruth. We may admire the genius of the man who could produce so consummately skilful a fiction; but we can never believe that it was by Divine direction and with help from above that he composed it, or that it was sent forth with the authorization of him "all whose words are true." Nor is it easy to conceive how what must have been known to be a fraud could have found acceptance and been reckoned among