

the leavening of their minds with sublime truths and new moral ideas and emotions." But he does not give us any of the particulars concerning the missionaries who accomplished all this, and who were invariably monks. The results of their labours he avails himself of, when forced in defence of the Christian faith to point to what the Church has done for the world; the names of the labourers he dare not name, for what follower of CALVIN and KNOX might without a blush openly appeal to the works of the sons of ST. BENEDICT in illustration of the benefits conferred upon the world by religion? "Less than a century after the death of BENEDICT," says MONTALEMBERT, "all that barbarism had won from civilisation was reconquered; and more still, his children took in hand to carry the gospel beyond those limits which had confined the first disciples of CHRIST. After Italy, Gaul, and Spain had been taken from the enemy, Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia were in turn invaded, conquered, and incorporated with Christendom. The West was saved; a new empire was founded; a new world begun."

Professor SALMOND, however, instead of instancing any one of the great missionaries from amongst the monks, who were the true victors, holds up to admiration a doubtful apostle, for, though not by name, he clearly indicates ULPHILAS, who, while he composed an alphabet, and gave to the Goths a version of Holy Scripture, did yet but win these barbarians to Arianism, and thereby infect with heresy all the kindred tribes of the North, from which many terrible deeds followed in due course. The Rev. Professor, however, perhaps desired only to be consistent, so far as his subject would allow him, and therefore took care to avoid stating broadly that the best proof he could adduce in support of the beneficial influence of Christianity, was the good works performed by men whom the narrowness of his creed compels him to believe to have been idolators.

But we merely make these remarks in passing. We are not concerned in any special manner with the notions of a church entertained by members of the Presbytery, individually or collectively; nor with the particular preacher whom they may select in order to illustrate their idea of primitive mission work. What we desire to call attention to is the following passage which occurred in this lecture to which we allude:—"Monastic institutions are in bad odour among us, and not without reason. There is a radical vice in the institution; it has always degenerated into viciousness; and it becomes at length an intolerable thing. However, there were long periods during which the monasteries were the centres of all humanising and civilising influences. They stood as a shield between a wild, lawless, feudal nobility and down-trodden serfs. They were the asylums and hospitals of the district. They were the homes of literature, where laborious hands saved from oblivion the treasures of ancient literature. They were the conservators of learning, music, poetry, and architecture—the nurseries of agriculture and arboriculture."

Here we have a picture of a tree rooted in evil, and yet bringing forth fruit surpassing the fabled apples of the Hesperides. The Rev. Professor evidently differs generally from the decision laid down in the Gospel, strict compliance with which he makes his boast.

"There is radical vice in the monastic institution," says the Rev. Professor SALMOND. But ATHANASIUS, BASIL, and CHRYSOSTOM, JEROME, AMBROSE, and AUGUSTINE were defenders of the monks, and promoters of their institution. Can it be that these great intellects shall be found incapable of judging as to what lay at the root of the system they approved? Their opinion will, at least, pass current as being of equal value with that of any Professor, however wise or learned he may be, who occupies a theological chair at the present day, and in comparison with such an one we leave it.

That the Monastic institution, however, "has always degenerated into viciousness," we strenuously deny. Such a statement is hardly justifiable even on the ground of its being a rhetorical flourish; and in a would-be champion of Christianity we should gladly see Christian charity predominant; which in this instance is not the case. There have been abuses in the institution referred to; but, says LACORDAIRE, "Abuses prove nothing against any institution; and if it is necessary to destroy every thing that has been subject to abuse—that is to say, of things which are good in themselves, but corrupted by the liberty of man—God himself ought to be seized upon his inaccessible throne, where too often we have seated our own passions and errors by His side." Had the Monastic institution generally degenerated into viciousness, it must have passed away long since from the face of the earth, instead of being as it is at the present day, and never

more vigorous nor flourishing. Those monasteries which became corrupt invariably perished.—"Life ebbed away from them little by little," says MONTALEMBERT,—"not only religious life, but life of every kind. In spite of the attractions which an existence easy and rich, almost without care and mortifications, offered to vulgar souls, a sufficient number of monks could not be found to people these dishonoured sanctuaries. Let us well observe, to the honour of human nature, as of Christianity and religious life, that the corrupt orders were always barren. The world would have none of them, as God would not. Like God, the world addressed them in these words: 'I would thou wert hot or cold—so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.'"—We quote from the English translation of *The Monks of the West*, which accounts for our use of the *Authorised Version*.

But of what avail is it to write? The "Protestant Tradition" requires that the Monastic institution should be considered vicious, and vicious it will continue on the tongues of Protestant lecturers to the end, let truth proclaim never so loudly in its favour, and its works testify to its nature,—the fruit to the value of the tree.

THE TRUE TEST.

THE death of a religious has reminded us of the bitter enemy which the Catholic Church possesses in the Government of the Czar. The lady to whom we refer was named NARISCHKIN. She was member of a noble family of Russia, and many years ago, while still in the morning of life, she renounced the schismatic creed of her country, and entered the fold of the Church. In consequence of this act, when she had concealed the step she had taken for several months, during which she resided in her uncle's house at Moscow, lest she should be the means of drawing down upon her relatives the ire of the EMPEROR, it was thought desirable that she should leave her native land, and she took advantage of the marriage of one of her sisters to remove to Venice, where she resided until she felt called upon to enter religion, which she did by taking the veil in a convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

We have, however, no intention of dwelling upon the life of this saintly nun; we quote it only in illustration of the nature of that despotism of the North towards which men's minds are, in consequence of the interest that attaches to the Eastern Question, at present turned, and in favour of which many arguments are being advanced; writers of mark even endeavouring to show that the cause of Russia is that of civilisation, and that it is no longer true to say the Tartar lurks beneath the Muscovite skin. But as straws indicate the direction and force of the winds, so do such slight matters as the event alluded to tell of the extent of the tyranny that holds in check even the individual members of a private family; and though this, of which we speak, happened in the reign of NICOLAS, that of ALEXANDER, if the truth were fully considered, would be found not one whit more enlightened or liberal.

Of all the royal or imperial houses of Europe, that of Russia is least to be estimated by any signs of nobleness or amiability shown by its head CATHERINE II. herself, disgraceful as was her life, and tyrannous her reign, gave many evidences of an admirable disposition. In her letters to Madame DE BIELKE there are instances of remarks that seem to betray a true woman's heart. She speaks of the games played with her little son for the sake of playing the child, and, pitying an ill-used Queen, declares that, for her own part, she could have loved her husband dearly, had such been his good pleasure. The sentiments expressed by her to PAOL, the Corsican patriot, breathe the very soul of magnanimity; and the picture drawn of her by GRIMM, when for the time she was wont to throw off in a degree the grandeur of her state, and converse with him familiarly, would seem to depict one to whom an ignoble thought, much less such an act, would be an impossibility: "*The Empress was in truth*," he says, "never absent from these *tête-à-tête*, but neither was she ever there too palpably." Yet of what CATHERINE was, let the student of history judge.

The occupant of the throne of all the Russias is not, therefore, to be judged by any symptoms of amiability shown by him. These indications have generally proved deceptive, and much better may ALEXANDER be known by the deeds of his myrmidons in Central Asia and in Poland, than by any signs of humanity given by him, if such there have been, as it seems to be assumed in some quarters. A tamer of "anarchic"