

LITERATURE.

SIGHTS AND THOUGHTS IN FOREIGN
CHURCHES AND AMONG FO-
REIGN PEOPLE.*By F. Faber, M.A., Fellow of University College, Oxford.*

Concluded.

THE USE OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS IN OTHER
TIMES.

"I should hope," he replied, "that there was no Christian who was ashamed to sign himself with the sign of the Cross, especially when, from any sudden and apparently causeless intrusion of unchaste thoughts, he has reason to believe his chamber filled with unclean spirits. Surely it is a great privilege not to be forbidden the use of that effectual token. To a serious man, how quickly it raises a fence between the world and himself! How does it remind him of his New Birth, when he rises in the morning! How does it meekly defy the evil angels when he leaves his chamber for the duties of the day! How does it bless his bed when he retires to rest! How does it, as it were, absolve him in the dead of night from the guilt of miserable dreams! How does it stay fits of sudden anger! How is it a very real and felt contact with the invisible world! O blessed Sign! how art thou like the finger of the Lord, the touch of One Whom we love and fear!" "How fearless, too," said I, "was the use of this dread admonition among the Saints of old! For what is wanting in Tertullian's catalogue?" "At every stir and movement, at every coming in and going out, at putting on the clothes, and binding on the sandals, at the bath and at the banquet, at the lighting of the lamps, at lying down or sitting, whithersoever the conversation of our life leadeth us, we do wear our forehead with the sign of the Cross." "And nature too," he replied, "was full of this sign to them, when they walked abroad. Not only were the pools of water and the fields of corn instructive shadows of the Font and the Altar, and the olive-yards of their holy unction, and the vines of the redeeming Blood; but the Cross, too, was every where among the boughs, and in the clouds, and on the plains, and on the skins of beasts. If St. Ephrem saw a little bird fly, he remembered that with outstretched wings it was making the sign of the Cross before the eye of Heaven, and that, if it closed its wings and marred the sign, it straightway fell to the earth. If he trusted himself on shipboard, he looked up to the mast, and, behold! a Cross; and when they spread the sail it was like the Body of One hanging on the Cross, propelling the ship, and forthwith the ship became the Church, and the fierce sea the world, and there was One on board, Whose Presence is our

haven.' 'I would,' I replied, that I could win the habit of so regarding the beautiful scenery of my daily walks, that when my body is driven out into the air for recreation, my soul might feed on beautiful symbols, and be kept pure by images of heaven, and be drawn to Christ by a thousand sacred admonitions.' 'This,' said he, 'is not a matter of the intellect. Such a habit must be won by continual meditation on divine things, by a love of Christ, and an imitation of Him. Leave off wrangling, and let go high-mindedness. Throw yourself into antiquity; its controversial witness is a great thing, but its beautiful spirit is a far greater. Strive to imbibe it; incorporate yourself into it. Fearlessly contract habits of thought alien to those you have now; and realize the truth, that there is neither space nor time in the Communion of Saints.'"

FEASTS AND FASTS ASSIST EVER IN PRESERVING
THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

"In the second place the Greek Church has been kept together and in health by the pious observation of her fasts and feasts. This was observed by an English writer in the seventeenth century, and must be obvious to those who have travelled there. Indeed there is in our nature so great a tendency to debase and corrupt every thing, that religion, when sundered from external observances, rapidly evaporates into systems of feelings and words, and the concentrated power of faith is dispersed into a mere feeble literary opinion. Where sound words are not laid up within the consecrated precincts of a creed or symbolical hymn, right belief quickly disappears in the dissonance of conflicting sects. Where devout cravings are not gathered up and collected into liturgies, zeal rapidly becomes profaneness, fear degenerates into gloom, and love is lost in sinful familiarity. There is no true liberty of prayer except in this sweet imprisonment. This is one consideration; and another is, that in the very ancient liturgies, the receding waters of antiquity have deposited many a scrap and spar of apostolical usage and tradition, which, embedded in the soil, diffuse fertility around them, and give to the liturgy a power over the soul beyond its own power, and a sacred character which makes it venturesome to shift a single attitude or gesture of worship exhibited therein. And further, to a people like the Greeks, under the Mahometan yoke, without books, or, in most cases, the ability to read, such liturgies, with their significant rites and annual commemorations, represented year by year monumentally, as it were, the great facts and truths of the faith. The symbols of church-worship were the books of the people, and constituted their instruction while young, and their edification