

as there is no prospect, nor indeed possibility, of change, her aim as a Church is fixed, for she can never be a guide to earnest souls.

Professor Mariano gives an explanation of the popular apathy to the claims of evangelical religion that its many divisions perplex the average Italian, and that its forms of worship are so bald and bare that they are repellant. Hence the people become indifferent and cease to be interested in any form of religion, and, it is to be feared, in its essence also. Prominent Italians of a more pronounced religious type than the Neapolitan professor, agree with him in his opinions concerning the Church of Rome, but they account for the indifference of the Italians to evangelical religion by assigning it to a different and probably truer, as it is a deeper, cause. The spiritual sensibilities of the people have, under a perverted and superstitious form of Christianity, become utterly deadened. Their consciences in relation to sin are torpid. They have lost the true conception of what sin means. They do not feel the burden of guilt, and consequently have no deep longings for spiritual deliverance. They do not feel that the Gospel is the good news of God to them. What is needed, observers tell us, is a direct awakening of the conscience to arouse the people from their spiritual lethargy.

This state of indifference cannot be of long continuance. Some of the best minds among the Italian people are beginning to realize the immense importance of deep, earnest, religious conviction. Things cannot remain as they are without becoming decidedly worse. Morality, personal and national, is sure to suffer, and then the hopes of Italian progress would be vain. There is much earnest effort put forth for the extension of the Gospel in the Italian peninsula, and the foremost place among the agencies promoting it must be assigned to the Waldensian Church, which for centuries has borne faithful testimony to the truth of Christ. Many are the excellent and cheering results from these efforts, but the urgency is great. At the Reformation Italy had the offer of spiritual emancipation but she rejected it. In happier days a second opportunity offers. How will she act? Her future depends on the attitude she assumes to the revealed truth of God.

A PIOUS FRAUD.

THE quaint town of Treves nestling on the banks of the Moselle in Rhenish Prussia is at present a centre of great attraction. In this ancient town legends grow as luxuriantly as the vines that cluster so plentifully in its neighbourhood. It claims a fabulous antiquity and certainly has evidences of a remote antiquity. Helena, the so-called inventor of the true cross, is said to have presented to the Church at Treves the seamless coat which Jesus wore at the crucifixion. This precious relic, it is asserted, has been sacredly preserved ever since by the successive archbishops of the diocese. At rare intervals the holy coat is exhibited with much pomp and splendour to all who care to see it. Last week an exhibition of the seamless coat was opened which will continue for about six weeks, and will be the means of attracting large numbers to a town that normally passes a drowsy and commonplace existence. All the modern arts of the boomster are resorted to for the purpose of encouraging pilgrims to visit this little Prussian town of about 26,000 inhabitants. The Pope has given the pious fraud his infallible benediction; the religious guides of the place have offered the usual inducements in the way of indulgences to the faithful who assist at the function. The claims of rivals have been set aside. Argenteuil in France has also a holy coat, but its genuineness has been disputed and its pretensions silenced by the help of science. It has, under microscopic examination, been discovered that the fabric is of camel's hair while the Treves garment is shown to be made of linen. Who after that can doubt that the Prussian, not the French, is the genuine article?

The inhabitants of Treves, seeing that in the vast multitudes attracted by the spectacle, there is a rich pecuniary harvest for them are eagerly seconding the efforts of the Churchmen in advertising the town. The railways likewise are doing all they can to encourage the travel which will help the dividends their shareholders expect. That the stream of travel, bearing on its bosom devout Roman Catholics whose credulity is equal to the occasion, the curious, the idle, and those who follow any stream in whatever direction it may flow, will be of vast proportions is certain. What will be the effect of this singular phenomenon on the popular mind?

How many will be in a position to believe that the relic on exhibition is the veritable coat worn by the Saviour in His last agony when dying for the sins of men? Very few indeed. Though the Pope has given the exhibition his sanction and blessing, is it possible that, without reservation, he believes that this is the identical robe that fell to the Roman soldier when the lot was cast? Leo XIII. is not an imbecile. It is quite possible he may have reasonable doubts, yet, for the sake of expediency he may make believe that he believes the legend that attributes to Helena the gift of the precious relic. Do the ecclesiastics more immediately interested in the exhibition themselves accept the story they tell the outside world? It is a rare device for interesting the crowd and bringing plentiful supplies to the priestly coffers. If they have doubts, they discreetly keep them to themselves. Do those who hope to reap a large harvest from the influx of people into the town cordially accept the figment as a sober, historical verity? Simply to ask such questions is to anticipate negative replies. Is it then on the principle that human nature is gullible, and that gain, whether material or religious, may be made of it that responsible religious authorities are found the chief promoters of this huge appeal to human credulity? Perhaps. But may not those who believe in the almost universal potency of humbug be liable to deceive themselves? The masses are not now so credulous as they once were. The schoolmaster is abroad and woe to those who either consciously or unconsciously try to fool them with antiquated legends with no better substantiation than that they have been traditionally received.

Let anyone at leisure balance the probabilities of the truth or falsity of this relic being what those who exploit it declare it to be. When it passed to the Roman soldier it disappeared from the ken of history. What he did with it is not and cannot be known. Through now many hands did it pass before finally coming into the possession of Helena? Is it likely that such a garment would have resisted the disintegrating action of centuries? But it may be urged that the holy coat was miraculously preserved. But if so, why? What purpose would be served by it? A so-called miracle of this sort does not harmonize with Christ's miracles. They were all of them wrought for the bodily and spiritual good of men. What doctrine can a cast-off garment corroborate? No doubt we shall hear of miraculous healings among nervous sufferers who make the pilgrimage to Treves. That, however, would mean little, and be no more impressive than the stories we hear about the doings at Ste. Anne de Beaupré. A strong probability of pious fraud is found in the fact that Treves has many competitors claiming possession of the seamless coat. It is said that Galatia in A.D. 580 possessed a holy coat. Nine years later Jerusalem put forth a like claim. So pious a country as Spain must needs have a similar precious relic, and accordingly we find that Oviedo glories in one in the year 800, while almost a century later Santiago de Compostella makes a rival claim. The statement is made that London even in 1066 had such a relic to show. Bremen and Treves in Germany both had holy coats, but somehow Treves has kept the lead. This possibly may be owing to the fact that in the sixteenth century Pope Leo X. by apostolic decree placed the genuineness of the holy coat of Treves beyond dispute. Even as late as 1843 Pope Gregory XVI., the immediate predecessor of Pius IX., declared the coat at Argenteuil to be the one really worn at the crucifixion. When Popes disagree whose decision can be trusted?

The present exhibition has been boomed with a persistency and enterprise that the coming world's fair can hardly surpass. As a piece of worldly-wise tactics it has succeeded. The crowds have commenced to rush in. For a time at least they will not be stopped by the cold air of criticism. The crowd will gather momentum as it grows, and it will only stop when it has exhausted itself. But afterwards? What will be the moral effect of the pilgrimage to Treves? The popular mind is not so tolerant of the pageantries and superstitions of Rome as it was in 1844, the time of the last exhibition. Even then it occasioned a secession from the Church of Rome which for a time was of some magnitude. Johann Ronge protested to the then archbishop of the diocese against what he openly called an abuse and a deception. He found many sympathizers within the pale of the Church itself, and many more were scandalized. Possibly the ecclesiastics may be of opinion that the present time is more auspicious for the exhibition than 1844. We shall soon see. The Church that for unworthy ends sanctions a deception and renders itself a party to a pious fraud has but little moral and spiritual influence to lose thereby.

Books and Magazines.

AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG MEN. By Rev. E. Wallace Waits, D.D. (Owen Sound: Sun Publishing Co.) The immediate occasion of this discourse, which has been published by request, was the sad drowning accident in which Mr. Thomas A. Taylor lost his life. The discourse is able, impressive and full of tender feeling. It will no doubt be extensively read both with pleasure and profit.

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN RULERS, OR, Religion and Men of Government. Compiled by Rev. Edward J. Cuddings. (New York: Bromfield & Co.) In this volume there is a large collection of biographical and historical sketches of the life and times of men who have taken a prominent part in the public affairs of the United States. Much curious and interesting information is conveyed to the reader. The sketches are brief and cannot weary the reader with prolixity. The attractiveness of the volume is enhanced by the presentation of numerous life-like and striking portraits.

STUMBLING STONES REMOVED FROM THE WORLD OF GOD. By Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D. (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co.)—In this little book many supposed difficulties of the Bible are shown not to be such in fact, and such simple rules of interpretation of a general character are laid down, as to make clear the literal truth of many passages which to some minds have previously been doubtful or only capable of the explanation that they were used metaphorically. The book is especially timely, now that general interest is turned towards the interpretation of the Scriptures.

ATMA A Romance. By A. C. F. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son.)—The author of this little book has ventured on an experiment. Wherever the sentiment suited the plain highway of prose is relinquished for a loftier flight in verse. It is an Indian story. The author has entered into the feelings and aspirations of the oriental mind and given remarkably felicitous expression to the longings and experiences of an ardent soul that craves a knowledge of God and truth. The usual incidents of romance are skilfully and naturally introduced. The work has been done in a fashion to secure the interest and admiration of the intelligent reader. The little book is worthy of an extended circulation.

CLOTHED WITH THE SUN; OR, from Olivet to the Gates of Glory. A historical simile. By Rev. Joseph H. Hiltz. (Toronto: printed for the author by William Briggs.) In this work Mr. Hiltz, who so well told the "Experiences of a Backwoods Preacher" and "Among the Forest Trees," has in this work attempted a more adventurous flight. He describes in allegorical form the progress of the Christian Church, personified by a woman named Ecclesia, from its institution to its consummation. The chief incidents in the history of the past are briefly and graphically related, and the future progress of the Church is outlined by the suggestive hints furnished in the Book of Revelation. Mr. Hiltz has produced an interesting book that will be read with profit by old and young.

LITTLE THINGS IN EVERYDAY LIFE. (New York: Thomas Whitaker, Bible House.)—We have lately received and read with much interest, a little book, containing six little sermons on six little things, and advise our readers to take a little money and send for the book and read it, and then hand it to some one else, and thus keep it busy doing missionary work. The subject of the sermons are, "Little Duties," "Kindnesses," "Efforts," "Cares," "Pleasures," "Sins." If our readers will follow the suggestions of these sermons and put them in practice, they will be surprised at the greatness of the results. It is full of plain truths and good hints about good living, that all of our readers might well lay to heart.

THE ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. (New York: Macmillan & Co.)—John Todhunter opens the August number with a most interesting account of George Wilson, an artist of great talent and rich promise, who died recently. The paper is embellished with several specimens of Wilson's work. Finely illustrated papers are "Tewkesbury Abbey," by Dean Spence, and "Old Landmarks," by Dewey Bates. The illustrations to the paper "Dickens and Punch," will be examined with curious interest. They are reproduced from the pages of the Fleet Street jester and some of them recall the great actors in the political drama half a century ago. The other features of the magazine are of excellent quality.

BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP AND INSPIRATION. Two papers by Professors Llewelyn J. Evans and Henry Preserved Smith, of Lane Theological Seminary. (Cincinnati: Robert Clark & Co.) These papers were lately read before the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Cincinnati. They discuss the problems of criticism and show what facts must be considered, both in the New Testament and in the Old, in order to a correct doctrine of inspiration. They are papers of more than usual merit. Their authors have given conscientious, and scholarly study to the great question on which they write, with an evident sense of responsibility resting on them. The results of that study are here presented in clear and convincing arguments. In all great controversies much is contributed having great temporary value, but it is evident that in this instance, Professors Evans and Smith have produced a work that is of permanent worth.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN. By Marcus Dods, D.D. (Toronto: Willard Tract Depository.) A new volume of the splendid series forming the "Expositor's Bible" has recently made its appearance. Both subject and author entitle it to a cordial reception. For most Bible students the Fourth Gospel possesses a singular attractiveness. Many accomplished scholarly and spiritually-minded men have given to the world the result of their pains-taking labours, but no one is able to give the full and complete meaning of the divine utterances it contains. No one has been able to sound the depths of His teaching whose farewell discourses it contains. Professor Dods has found the evangel of the beloved disciple a delightful and inspiring study, and his first volume, which deals with the first part of the Gospel is a remarkably satisfactory production. His introductory note, without scholastic verbiage, states clearly the purpose and scope of John's Gospel and his whole method of treatment will commend itself to the intelligent reader. The exposition is charged with rich and suggestive thought. It may be mentioned that, if from recent ecclesiastical conflicts doubts were raised as to Professor Dods' soundness on the subject of our Lord's divinity, all doubt in that direction will be set at rest by the teachings of the present volume.