

most decisive triumphs, and were followed by disciples most gifted in the career of preaching. Risi : in those countries the eternal sun of justice shed the rays of redemption from thence over all the rest of the benighted earth. Even in the days of St. Jerome the west of Asia is described as a Very Eden of Christianity—the centre of attraction for whatever was most eminent for fervour and perfection in the rest of Christendom. He describes the faithful as crowding thither in multitudes—not only from Gaul but from Britain, considered at that time to be separated from the whole world; from Pontus, Armenia, Persia, Ethiopia, and even the distant India. He describes them as flocking in swarms to the holy places from Cappadocia, Mesopotamia, as well as from Cælo Syria, Egypt and the entire East. "Quæcumque in Gallia fuerit primus, huc properat. Divisus ab orbe nostro Britannus, si in religione processerit, occiduo sole dimisso, quærit locum summa sibi tantum et Scripturarum relatione cognitum Quid referamus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indias et Ethiopias populos: ipsamque juxta Ægyptum fertilem monachorum Pontum et Cappadociam, Syriam Cælen et Mesopotamiam cunctaque orientis examina."* He celebrates the concord with which so many nations, differing in customs and in dialects, were united in hymning the Divine praises. He says, that if you walked forth in the fields you were startled to find that Halleluiah was the burden of the ploughman's song—that the reaper and the dresser of the vine beguiled their labours, or the intervals of relaxation with hymns and psalmody. Even the most inhospitable deserts seem to bloom with the piety of countless hermits. But, alas! how many emphatic evidences impress the pilgrim in our days with the conviction that the curse of Islamism has passed over this favoured portion of the vineyard of the Lord and spared scarcely a vestige of its ancient beauty. Even Mount Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre are insulted by Turkish infidels the Grotto of the Nativity is in their hands. Nor is it without bitter scoffs and sacrifices that religion can win a license to pour out the anguish of her heart in silence beside these and the other holy places.

But in proportion as truth and sanctity have been blasted, the remnants of idolatry seem to flourish amongst the Druse population, and all that is most impure in the Gnostic heresies—in the errors planted by Nestorius and Eutiches, seems to grow more rank amongst the ruins of Christian Civilization, and to flourish as if in congenial soil. Such is the condition of Wes-

tern Asia at the present day. On the other side of the Uralian mountains and the Indus, Paganism reigns with all the fatal variety of its doctrines and its observances. The wretched tribes that wander on the shores of the frozen ocean prostrate themselves before their gross fetisees. The Mongul hordes who carry the symbolical idols of Buddha in procession and are involved in a profound complicated system of superstition. How innumerable are the populations held by the Brahmin under the two fold delusion of a learned mythology and an insatiating worship. In the wilds of Tartary, and throughout the cities of India, the Alcoran counts its disciples by myriads. In fine, if in the north and south of those regions two European powers have extended their dominions, it is still error that is propagated by the military and commercial enterprises of Russia and England. But still the moral darkness becomes more profound as we penetrate into the mysterious East, from which light seems to emanate. In the missions in the Levant religion may be somewhat cheered by meeting even with her erring sisters in the Christian sects, which overspread the country, or with Musselman infidelity, which, notwithstanding its errors, is still connected with Christianity by some reminiscences. In Russian Asia and Hindostan, idolatry finds itself opposed and kept in check by the presence of its foreign masters; but it domineers, without controul, over the immense regions which extend from the foot of the Himalayan mountains to the shores of the Pacific. There does it find its complete social manifestation in the morals and laws of three immense empires, Anam, China, and Japan. There is realized in all its horrors that slavery of Satan which weighed upon Pagan antiquity, and of which we, in modern times, can form no idea. For three centuries the spirit of Nero and Dioclesian seems to have been revived in those regions, for the trial of Christ's servants. The funeral piles of Japan are no sooner extinguished, than the scaffolds of Corea and Tong King succeed them. The vast islands of the South Sea are peopled, it is conjectured, by about twenty millions, exhibiting all the intellectual shades of the human race, from the ingenious, polished and sometimes heroic Malay, to the hideous natives of Australia, and the cannibals of New Guinea. They also present all the varieties that error and superstition can exhibit. Mahomedanism, Brahmanism, and the worship of Buddha, in the Sunda Islands—idolatry reduced to a system of dogmas in Polynesia—a gross fetishism in new Guinea, and a vague adoration of evil spirits amongst the brutalized tribes of

*S. Hieron, Ep. 44.