

thrown, still its hideous form has been unmasked, and the strength of its assaults daily increases. Already have some desperate wounds been inflicted on the system. The great Overbeck, that prince of Christian painters, has raised up a school of mystical and religious artists, who are fast putting to utter shame the natural and sensual school of art, in which the modern followers of Paganism have so long degraded the representations of sacred personages and events. In France, M. Le Comte De Montalembert (a man, of whom it may be said as of Savonarola, the Dominican, *sans reproche, et sans peur*), has fully set forth the fatal effects of modern Paganism on Christian feelings and monuments; and already his denunciations of these errors, and his exposition of Catholic art and truth, have produced a great improvement of taste and ideas on these manners; and various publications have already appeared, and many more are preparing, on the excellence of the despised middle ages.

The work of M. Rio on Christian painting is an admirable production, and must produce many converts to ancient art.—In England, much has been done towards restoring Catholic antiquity, and a fine spirit has arisen in the head university itself, where a society of learned men has been organized for the study and preservation of Christian architecture. The ecclesiastical antiquities of the country are considered worthy of a patient research and elaborate illustration. Innovators frequently denounced, blocked arches and windows restored, whitewash removed, and stained glasses reinserted. All these are good signs, and promise much for the future.

#### CATHOLIC ART IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Any shapeless fragment, any mean potter's vessel, any illegible inscription, provided it be *but antique*, will be deposited on a pedestal or within a glass case in our national museum. No price can be too great for a cameo or a heathen bust; but every object of Catholic and national art is rigidly excluded from the collection.—In the whole of that vast establishment, there is not even one room, one shelf, devoted to the exquisite productions of the middle ages. In this we are actually behind every country in Europe. At Paris, amidst all the Pagan collections of the Louvre, the Christian student will find exquisite specimens of enamels, ivory carvings, jewels, silver work, chasings in metal—all in the first style of Catholic art, and of every date. At Nuremberg, Rouen, and many mere provincial towns, are public galleries of Christian antiquities of the greatest interest. England alone, the country of all others where such a collection could best be formed, is utterly destitute of it. In sepulchral monuments we are rich indeed. If correct casts of all the effigies of royal and ecclesiastical persons, remaining in the cathedral and other churches, were carefully taken, coloured fac-simile from the originals, and arranged in chronological order, what a splendid historical and national series they would form and this might easily be done at even a less cost than the transport of a monstrous

fragment of an Egyptian god from the banks of the Nile.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters, on the history of Protestant destruction in England, stand substantially as in the former edition. From the fifth chapter we extract a few eloquent sentences that have been added, on the subject of

#### THE NEGLECTED STATE OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

The neglected state of this once glorious church is a national disgrace. While tens of thousands are annually voted for comparatively trifling purposes, and hundreds of thousands have been very lately expended in mere architectural deformity, not even a small grant to keep the sepulchral monuments of our ancient kings in repair has ever been proposed; and it is quite surprising to see the utter apathy that exists amongst those who, both by their birth and station, might be looked upon as the legitimate conservators of our national antiquities. Where can we find another spot, I will not say in England, but in Europe, which contains so many splendid monuments of ancient art—doubly interesting from the historical associations connected with them? If we stand immediately behind the high altar screen, of exquisite tabernacle work and curious imagery, we have presented at one view the tombs of Edward I., invader of Scotland; Henry III., rebuilders of the vast abbey itself; the faithful and amiable Queen Eleanor; Henry V., the conqueror of France; Edward III. and his Queen Philippa; King Richard II.; and last, but not least, the shrine of St. Edward, which, although despoiled of its rich and sumptuous ornaments, still contains the more precious deposit of the relics of that holy confessor, whose virtues have even survived the calumnies of the so-called Reformation, and still are held up to the imitation of our monarchs at the solemnity of their coronation.

Through the arched chantry of Henry V. are seen the massive brazen gates and grand entrance to the monumental chapel of the seventh Henry—a matchless example of the latter style. Beyond the tombs I have been describing, extend the aisles and lateral chapels, filled with monumental effigies of ecclesiastical and noble personages, all celebrated in English chronicles, and of surpassing beauty of execution; and these are contained at the *extreme end* of a church of immense length, and whose groined canopy reaches more than one hundred feet from the tessellated pavement—a church whose history is interwoven with that of the country itself, and should be inconceivably dear to us from its religious, ancient, and national associations.—It is not necessary for a man to be an architect, an antiquary, or an artist, to understand the vast claims which the Abbey of Saint Paul's, Westminster, has upon his respect and veneration.—If he possesses but one spark of that love of country and pride of nation that ought to be found in every man's breast, he would view with religious respect every stone of this noble structure; but it is soul-sickening to sit day by day, as I have done, and see the class of people who come to inspect this church, and the feelings with which they perambulate its sacred aisles—a mere flock of holiday people who come

to London to see sights, and take the abbey on their way to the Surrey Zoological Gardens. It might naturally have been expected that, from its vicinity to the Houses of Parliament, the Catholic members would occasionally enter its sacred walls, and try to imbibe some of the devotional spirit of ancient days, which its venerable architecture and sepulchral memorials could hardly fail to impart, and which should be no small consolation and relief to a Catholic mind, compelled to sit during the noisy debates of a political warfare.—But I much question if these gentlemen have ever penetrated westward of Henry the Seventh's Chapel. The apathy of royalty towards this sacred fabric is truly melancholy; we hear much of the interest certain distinguished personages take in the performances of a learned monkey, or equestrian evolutions, but small regard indeed do they pay to the resting place of their ancestors. Even should they refuse to contribute a small sum out of the thousands which they annually squander on trifles, towards so pious and worthy an object as the restoration of the national monuments, a visit to the neglected and desecrated pile of Westminster might teach them the instructive lesson that royalty departed is easily forgotten; and if the memory of those great kings of England, who, by their own personal valour and energy, achieved the most important victories, and were foremost in camp and council, is not sufficient to procure decent respect to their place of sepulture, into what extreme oblivion, and neglect must those sovereigns fall after their death, whose lives are a mere routine of fashionable luxury, their greatest achievement a pony drive, their principal occupation—to dine!

From the Catholic Herald.

#### LIFE AND WRITINGS OF ST. EPHREM THE SYRIAN.

MR. EDITOR.—Your incidental notice, some time since, of the name and writings of St. Ephrem, the great light of the Syrian Church, who flourished in the fourth century, induced me to make some inquiries regarding his history. The result has been to me most gratifying, for it proves most satisfactorily the identity of doctrine of the Catholic Church in the present day, with that taught and defended by St. Ephrem, upwards of 1400 years ago. Having myself been so pleased, and instructed on the subject, I thought the following sketch which I borrow from the faithful pages of a church historian, might prove useful and pleasing to some of your readers.

“St. Ephrem was the most illustrious of all the doctors, who by their doctrine and writings have adorned the Syrian church in the fourth century. He was born in the territory of Nisbis, a strong city in Mesopotamia, and consecrated to God by his parents, from his cradle, like another Samuel, though he was eighteen years old when he was baptized. The great servant of God, St. James, Bishop of Nisbis, was his spiritual director and patron. He spent many years in the desert, out of which he came inflamed with the ardor of a Baptist, to preach penance with incredible zeal and fruit, and to an-

nounce the divine truths to a world buried in spiritual darkness and insensibility. Being ordained deacon of the church of Edessa, he became an apostle of penance, brought many idolators to the faith, and converted great numbers of Arians, Sabellians, Novatians, Millenarians, Marcionites, Apollinarians, Manicheans, and disciples of the impious Bardesanes, who denied the resurrection of the flesh. He never would consent to be promoted to the sacerdotal dignity, but continued always in the humble station of a deacon. His spotless purity was the fruit of his sincere humility and constant watchfulness over himself. He was deeply penetrated with the fear of the Divine judgment, and had always present to his mind the rigorous account he was to give to God for all his actions. Nothing seem more admirable in him than his compunction of heart, the sister of that sincere humility, which all his words, actions, and writings, breathed in a most affecting manner. He appeared always drowned in an abyss of compunction. Night and day his eyes seemed swimming in tears, which readily flowed from him in abundance, as often as he raised his heart to God, or remembered the sweetness of his divine love, or the baseness of sin. “We cannot call to mind his perpetual tears, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, without melting into tears. We cannot read his discourses on the last judgment without weeping. Where is the proud man, continues the same holy doctor, who would not become humble by reading his discourse on humility?—Who would not be inflamed with a divine fire by reading his treatise on charity? Who would not wish to be chaste in heart and spirit, by reading the praises he has given to virginity?”

St. Ephrem spoke with admirable perspicuity, copiousness and sententiousness, in an easy, unaffected style. Words flowed from him like a torrent, when he treated of spiritual subjects. His writings derive a singular energy from the natural bold tropes of the Syriac language, of which he was a perfect master, and have a graceful beauty and force, which no translation can attain; though his works are not studied compositions, but the effusions of an heart penetrated and overflowing with the most perfect sentiments of divine love, confidence, compunction, humility, and other virtues. He wrote seventy-six *Parables*, or moving exhortations to penance, and several treatises and sermons on compunction, on the vices and passions, on humility, on the last judgment, on fraternal charity, on the beatitudes and virtues, and divers other subjects. He also wrote commentaries on the first book of Moses, the fourth book of Kings, Joshua, Judges, Job, and on all the prophets, &c. His works demonstrate the uniformity in faith of the church in the fourth century, with that of the church of all ages. Nothing can be clearer than the texts collected by Ceillier, tom. 8, p. 101. from the writings of St. Ephrem in favor of the real presence of the sacred body of Christ in the holy Eucharist. His confidence in the precious fruit of this blessed sacrament of the altar raised his hopes and inflamed his love, especially in