

affecting of all his tragedies, which produced a deep impression on the French people, and is still a favorite on the stage. It is said that some of the great ladies of the day had complained to Voltaire that there was not enough love in his tragedies; he replied, that he had not thought love necessary to the drama, but since it was in their eyes so indispensable, he would compose a tragedy in which it should play a prominent part; he composed the piece in twenty-two days, and the success with which it was attended quite fulfilled all his expectations. In 1835 appeared "La Mort de César," in the two last scenes of which the French poet distinctly imitates Shakespeare; in these two scenes are some of the most beautiful models of eloquence of the French theatre. "Alyre," which was dedicated to his dear friend Madame du Chatelet, was performed in 1736, and "Mahomet," or "Le Fanatisme" in 1741. The latter gave offence to some of the church dignitaries, so Voltaire withdrew it from the stage, but the Pope, writing to him a few years later, congratulates him upon it, and calls it an admirable tragedy. Voltaire's next dramatic work was "Mérope," performed in 1745; this was enthusiastically received by the public, though it was severely criticised when it came from the press; the subject, so often before treated by dramatists, from Euripides down, was placed by Aristotle in the first rank of tragic subjects, and it never failed when well depicted to produce a great effect. About the year 1746, when Voltaire was given a place in the Academy, appointed historiographer of France, and created by the King one of the gentlemen in ordinary of his chamber, "Semiramis," "Brestes," and "Rome Sauvée," were composed and performed; the latter has for subject the conspiracy of Cataline. In 1755 appeared "L'Orphelin de la Chine," the idea for the subject of which was suggested to Voltaire by a Chinese tragedy, "L'Orphelin de Tchao," translated by Premare, which was written during the fourteenth century. In 1760 appeared Voltaire's last tragedy, and indeed his last literary effort written at the age of sixty-six, "Tancrède," in which the scene is laid at Syracuse in the year 1005, and in which is depicted the bravery and misfortunes of a Norman chevalier. Voltaire himself considered his dramas as his chief productions; for when on his return to Paris in 1778, he was waited on by all the great actors, and besought for a play, he answered, "I live only for you and through you."

In "Zaire," as in "Alyre," it is remarkable to notice how the taste of the poet overcomes the incredulities of the unbeliever, and draws from the Christian religion some of its most striking beauties.

In "Zaire," the first act opens with a scene between Zaire and Fatime, two slaves of Orosmane, Sultan of Jerusalem, who had been taken captive at an early age, and brought up in the Seraglio of the Sultan. Zaire expresses her contentment with her lot, having known no other, and relates how each day she is happier and more reconciled to her fate; born of Xtian parents, she now knows nothing of her religion, save the name, and even that conveys but little to her mind. Fatime asks if she has forgotten the generous French cavalier, who so struck the Sultan by his bravery and daring, that the conqueror let him return to his native country in peace, and who, before he left Jerusalem, promised to return and ransom the Xtian maidens. Zaire replies that two years have elapsed and he has not returned, and that even did he now return all would be changed for her, for the Sultan, Orosmane, loved her and desired to make her his wife. Fatime reminds her that Nérestan, the Christian knight, had told her that she was born of Xtian parents and remonstrates with her that she should think of uniting herself with one who was an enemy of all that she should hold dear. Zaire replies that whereas she knows nothing of Xtianity, her royal lover's devotion was very real to her, that sometimes she thought of the great truths spoken to them by Nérestan, and honored the religion of the Christians, but that soon left her, and, as she simply puts it, "Mais Orosmane m'aime, et j'ai tout oublié."

In the next scene Orosmane appears, and explains to Zaire how because of his great love to her, he wishes to make her a rightful sharer of his kingdom and honors, but that he must first be sure of having gained her heart, and desires her to tell him all her feelings with regard to him. Zaire begins a suitable reply when a messenger enters, announcing the arrival of Nérestan the captive Christian, who had been allowed to return to his own country. Nérestan enters and demands the freedom of Zaire, Fatime, and ten illustrious prisoners held captive by the Sultan, the ransom of all of whom he brings, and for whom he wishes to remain as hostage. Orosmane, who will not be outdone in generosity, bids him keep his gold and be free, and adds ninety to the number of Xtians whom he sets at liberty, only two of those named he will not deliver up; Zaire, whom he declares no one shall take from him, and Susignan, a prince of the blood royal of Jerusalem. Nérestan, who cannot understand these reservations, expostulates, but is silenced and dismissed by Orosmane. Nérestan then holds a conversation with Chatillon, one of the released cavaliers, in which he bewails the captivity of Susignan, and Chatillon advises him to ask Zaire to intercede for him. Just as Nérestan reminds him of the impossibility of an interview with Zaire, she herself appears, and speaking of the generosity of Orosmane, she relates how at her request he allowed this interview, and pardoned the aged Susignan. In the following scene Susignan enters, and after expressing his thankfulness for liberty, asks for, and has related to him the history of the capture and subsequent life of the younger captives, and recognizing a peculiar cross worn by Zaire, and putting together the dates given him, he finds in Nérestan and Zaire, two of his children who had been torn from his arms at an early age, and who he had long ago imagined dead. After mutual recognitions and embracings, Susignan to his horror is told the situation in which Zaire is placed; he thereupon declares to Zaire the wickedness of deserting her religion, and begs her with tears in his eyes to remain an Xtian. Orosmane in the next scene confides to one of his officers his distrust of Nérestan and his unwillingness to pardon Susignan, but Zaire had wished it, and so, he said, it should be as she desired. In act three, scene four, Zaire has an interview with Nérestan, in which he tells her that the shock

of finding his children, and one of them an infidel, had been too much for Susignan, and that he was dying; he then bewails her fate as slave to Orosmane, and is horrified to hear that she, the daughter of a prince, and of a Christian, should meditate marriage with an unbeliever. Overcome with horror he draws from her a promise that the marriage shall not be performed, before a priest whom he will secure, shall have baptized her, and that in the meantime she will say nothing to Orosmane. In scene seven, Orosmane enters Zaire to let the ceremony take place at once, that all is ready and that he only waits for her. She knows not what to say, nor how to explain, but confused and helpless gives vent to expressions of trouble and unhappiness, and finally leaves the room, while Orosmane, though unwilling to believe any ill of her, is confounded and uneasy at her behaviour. Zaire, after a conversation with Fatime, in which she describes her horrible situation and reiterates her expressions of love for Orosmane, has another interview with the Sultan, even more unsatisfactory than the former one, in which, though allowing her love for him, she clearly intimates that she is keeping some secret from him. Orosmane, though overcome with sorrow and a horrible suspicion, grants her petition to spend that one day in peace, and to-morrow she says he shall know all. In act four, scene five, a letter is brought to Orosmane, which an officer had intercepted on its way from Nérestan to Zaire, and which brought conviction to the hasty mind of the unfortunate Orosmane. In it Nérestan makes an appointment to meet Zaire in a secret place, and ends his hasty note with, "we must risk all; I shall die if you are unfaithful." Filled with rage and despair, Orosmane conceals his feelings and sends for Zaire, and without telling her what he has discovered, again asks her of her affection for himself, and regards each protestation of affection on her part as but another evidence of her powers of subterfuge. Orosmane, however, trying to disbelieve what seemed a certainty, resolved to let the letter be sent to her, and see if she would not neglect the orders contained therein. Zaire received the letter, though filled with doubts and uncertainty, does not hesitate to obey the summons, and sending a message by the slave that she will meet his master at the appointed place, the news is at once carried to Orosmane. Mad with rage and a desire for vengeance, he sends orders for Nérestan to be put in irons and brought to him, while he himself waits for Zaire at the rendezvous. Zaire arriving hears footsteps and asks if it be Nérestan. "No," replies the voice of Orosmane, "it is I whom thou hast betrayed and deceived," and he plunges the knife in her breast. Hardly has he done the fatal deed, when, loaded with irons, Nérestan is brought before him, and catching sight of Zaire's dead body, he takes the situation at a glance; with a sorrowful cry of, "Oh, my sister! dead! oh, monster!" the eyes of Orosmane are opened. Nérestan quickly relates all, and Fatime assures the king of the world of love and devotion for him in the heart of Zaire. Overcome with remorse and sorrow, he orders the release of Nérestan and all his companions, and begs the former to carry his sword to his countrymen in France, tell them of his crime, but add that Zaire's murderer had been avenged. Then, turning toward the dead body of his murdered love, he drives his sword into his own heart and falls lifeless at her feet.

ESEM.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION.

Among the various and varied efforts made by man for the relief of man may be reckoned the "St. John Ambulance Society," for the help of the sick and suffering. The Order of St. John of Jerusalem was founded about 1092 for the maintenance of a hospital in that city, and afterwards for the defense of Christian pilgrims on their journeys to and from the Holy Land. It subsequently became a knightly institution, known as the "Knights of Malta," but always had its hospitals and maintained the duty of alleviating sickness and suffering. About the year 1100 this Order was first introduced into England, and held high place there till 1540, when an Act of Parliament put an end to it. 1557 saw it restored, only however, in two years time to have its property confiscated, when the Order withdrew to Malta, its headquarters, and was practically lost to England. In Malta the fortunes of this institution varied greatly. At last they culminated in the loss of that place, after which each surviving branch had to mark out its own future course. About half a century since, five of the seven then existing remnants of the Order, decreed the revival of the English branch, and from that time up to the present, as far as possible, it has pursued its original object, the helping of the sick and suffering.

The institution of the "St. John Ambulance Association," for instruction in the first treatment of "the injured in peace and the wounded in war," has engaged the attention, and is the outcome of this Order, together with many other good works. This Order and the societies emanating from it, belong to no particular nationality or religious denomination, but is truly Catholic, embracing in its members those who are willing, like their Divine Master, to devote themselves to the work of helping the sick and suffering.

During the past few years the growth of this Society in Britain and her colonies has been most marked. Eight of the most prominent names in England stand on its roll as patrons, presidents and members. Her R. H. Princess Beatrice is president of the Shetland and Orkney Islands centre, and the Queen has also given a gracious recognition of this noble work by sending a handsome donation to the same centre for the purpose of defraying the expense of establishing classes there. Her R. H. Princess Louise is president of the centre at Bermuda, organized there by Lady Brassy, to whose exertions to further the cause, much gratitude is due. Colonel Duncan has done much for the Association, devoting his abilities, time, and money to advocating and developing this new school of philanthropy. Her R. H. Princess Christian has shown her interest in the work by passing the