

there ever having once arisen between them the least dissension, either in word or deed, at which the saint, being filled with astonishment, confessed that they were indeed better and more perfect than he was ; and this, notwithstanding that he had received from the divine goodness many great and wonderful favours.

[The following Letters may be found at the end of a work written by an Oxford Clergyman, and lately published, entitled, " The Ideal of a Christian Church." They are reprinted here, not so much for the pleasing and valuable testimony they bear to the influences of religion in Belgium, as unexceptionable confirmation of the general faithfulness of our " Letters from Belgium," and which have been so very much admired.]

Concluded.

LETTER III.

*My dear Ward,*

I will put down indistinctly, as they occur to me, some points in connexion with the Church abroad which made an impression upon me whilst in Normandy, in 1842. I saw, near Rouen, a College intended for young men of all professions, and conducted by priests, and was much struck with the religious character which seemed impressed upon every thing about it. The chapel was very pleasing and reverent in its arrangement, and bore marks of the interest which the students took in it. On the altar were flowers placed there by them ; and over it a beautiful picture, which was given by them. The person who took us into it, and who was much like the porter of a College at Oxford, was very reverent in his behaviour, and spoke with much interest and intelligence of the mode of life in general, and particularly of the religious habits of the students. The grounds in which they generally take their recreation were very nicely laid out in avenues and walks, in which we were told, they often practised the hymns and other music which they used in Church. There were also little chapels here and there about the grounds, into which they might retire for private devotion. Each has a small private sleeping room. Whilst they are at dinner, one of them reads some book aloud ; one which was mentioned to us was Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints ; others, however, which were mentioned, were of a purely historical character.

I was also much struck with the hospitals, in which the poor were served with the greatest care by Sisters of some religious Order, many of whom, we were told, had been persons of great wealth and high rank. The wards were named after different Saints, and in each of them there was, I think, an altar, and also religious pictures, and other objects of the same kind, which gave a religious air to the place, whilst the vases of fresh flowers, which were placed by them, and the airiness and cleanliness of the rooms, and pleasant

view from the windows, gave at the same time in another way an idea of joy and cheerfulness.

At Rouen, we were much struck with a person, who showed us over one of the Churches, and whom we had an opportunity of seeing frequently. He was in a very low rank of life. He gave me the idea of being a very religious person ; and we obtained from him a great deal of information about the practices of the church, with which he seemed well acquainted, and he spoke of them with the greatest interest. When we were going away, he asked us to remember him in our prayers ; and said he would always remember us, and tell his children to do the same ; and the prayers of little children, he said, are very pleasing to Almighty God. What struck me particularly about him was an appearance of reverence and devotion and self-forgetfulness, which one so rarely meets with among persons of the same condition in England.

The appearance and devotion in the people whom we saw in the Churches was in many instances particularly striking ; and in general the heartiness and joy with which they joined in the religious services of the Festivals, gave me an idea of their regarding religion as something in which they felt their happiness to be really interested.

Believe me, dear Ward,

Yours faithfully,

LETTER IV.

*My dear Ward,*

I ought to say in the way of deduction from the value of my testimony to the practical operation of the Church abroad, that I have been in two of the foreign Catholic countries only, and in each for a very short time. It is true that I have visited both these countries more than once ; but it is of my latter visits that I wish to speak principally since it was in these only that I was of age and experience to form any fair idea of the state of things, or that I had sufficient interest in ecclesiastical matters to turn my attention to points of that sort.

The only countries of which I know any thing, are France and Belgium ; and of France, no part but Normandy, which is generally said to be a favourable specimen. When I first visited Belgium (in 1828) it was under the disadvantages which I have just spoken ; but even then (though, so far as I had any religious feelings and interests at all, they were decidedly anti-Roman) I remember to have been impressed, almost as it were against my wishes, with the exceedingly religious appearance of the Flemish towns. Of course I thought it all superstition and so on ; but even then, I drew comparisons between the aspect of