

and from here that they were sent to Moscow for publication in the *Russian Messenger* while the siege was going on. The complete work is composed of three detached portions, entitled respectively Sebastopol in December, in May, and in August. These are neither personal recollections nor imaginary adventures, but something between the two: the personal impressions of the writer given under a slight veil of partly unreal circumstances. All the characteristics of the battle-scenes of 'War and Peace' are in these thrilling narratives of the events of the three periods chosen, and the personal emotion of the young officer of twenty-six, who relates what he sees passing around him constantly, moves his readers just as the sympathetic imagination of the mature author of 'War and Peace' does twelve years later, when he shows them, through the minds of his various heroes, his own impressions of war by means of the great battles of Napoleon.

After the Crimean war was over, Tolstoi published another semi-autobiographical work, 'Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth,' a translation of which, by Mme. Arvède Barine, under the title 'Enfance, adolescence, jeunesse,' is announced as in preparation, and of which fragments have already been published in the *Revue Bleue*. This work, as we have had occasion to point out, apropos of the American version, has all the charm of a biography without actually relating the events of the author's external life. In all that is essential, however, the young Nicolas seems to reflect the growth of the moral and intellectual nature of Tolstoi himself, as in the narration of his boyish faults and vanities and self-reproaches, in the minute and vivid descriptions of his life and companions, we divine the personal experience of the author.

A little later than this, but during the same period of his life, in the years between his retirement from the army and his marriage, Tolstoi published his third work of importance, the exquisite idyl which has now appeared, under the title of 'Les Cosaques,' in the same volume with the 'Scènes du siège de Sébastopol.' As long ago as 1878, Mr. Eugene Schuyler gave to English readers a translation of this work, which Turgenieff is said to have considered "the finest and most perfect production of Russian literature"; but it is only within a few months that it has been made accessible to French readers. 'Les Cosaques' contains the first fresh impressions made upon Tolstoi during his years of military service in the Caucasus, by the free and uncivilized life into which he was thrown, and by the wild and magnificent scenery surrounding him. It is the poetic expression of the feelings of a very young man, filled with delight and astonishment at the new existence revealed to him. The story itself is slight, but the interest never flags; for here, as in all his later works, it does not depend upon events but upon the analysis of character and of feeling, the passionate admiration of the young man for everything around him, and his instinctive repulsion for the old life which he had left. Though published some time after this life in the Caucasus was over, and only after several other books, 'Les Cosaques' has a certain freshness and joyousness of youth which none of the other works of Tolstoi possess; and if it was revised and arranged at the time of its publication, it was probably written, in its essential parts, in the midst of the scenes and the persons pictured in it.

In 1860, at the age of thirty-two, Tolstoi married, and very soon after retired to his estates in the country, where he has lived ever since, in the midst of his family and tenants, a life which the readers of 'Anna Karénina' might easily imagine for themselves, even without the revelations of his later works. At some time during this long

period of retirement from the world, but probably not during the earlier years, he wrote the charming story which has been translated by M. le comte d'Hauterive under the title of 'Katia' (Paris: Perrin; Boston: Schoenhof). This translation was first published in 1878, when Tolstoi had scarcely been heard of outside of Russia, and it was only when the book was republished a few months ago that it began to be read. Another translation, with the title 'Mon mari et moi,' appeared last winter; but it was buried in the pages of the *Revue Internationale* and was read by few. Nothing that the author has ever done contains more exquisite writing than this; none among his charming young women are more lovable than Katia; none of his men more simply noble than Sergie; and nowhere has he revealed with so tender and sympathetic a touch the most delicate and evanescent shades of sentiment and of feeling as in this exquisite little story.

The latest translation from the writings of Tolstoi is a volume containing half-a-dozen short stories with the collective title 'À la recherche du bonheur' (Paris: Perrin; New York: Christern). If the preceding works represent and sum up all the literary life of the author, this one is the expression of the moral and religious beliefs and feelings which now govern all his actions. These popular stories, legends, and parables are written for the Russian peasants, with the same simplicity and directness of purpose that he has shown in other directions. If his readers of another class regret the author they have lost, they cannot help respecting and admiring the moralist who writes for the poor and humble with so much single-minded devotion.

'Souvenirs de la maison des morts' (Paris: Plon & Nourrit; New York: Christern) is the expressive title of the book in which Dostoyevsky has related his years of exile and imprisonment in Siberia, in consequence of supposed complicity in a political conspiracy. A slight veil is thrown over the reality; a few unimportant modifications of facts place it beyond the limits of the severe rules of the Government censure, which, without some such disguise, would have prevented its publication. But in everything of importance it is the veritable 'Souvenirs' of Dostoyevsky himself. At twenty-eight years of age, in December, 1849, after eight months of imprisonment, he was led out with his companions to hear the sentence which had been pronounced upon them. It was immediate death. As the prisoners stood together upon the scaffold waiting the execution of the sentence, a white flag was raised between them and the file of soldiers whose guns were already directed towards them. It was a signal of respite; they were to be sent to Siberia. Dostoyevsky's sentence was four years of hard labor in prison, and afterwards incorporation for life in a Siberian regiment as a common soldier, with the loss of civil rights and his rank as a gentleman. It was during these four years spent in irons and constantly guarded, in the midst of the worst criminals, never for an instant alone, with no books but a Testament, no knowledge of the outer world, that the young author, who had already begun to be famous, laid up the materials for his 'Souvenirs de la maison des morts.' It seems as if he had reproduced in the pages of this book all the events, all the companions, all the agonies of these years. It is done with the utmost patience and submission of spirit on his own part; with the finest insight into the characters of his companions. But what is most impressive is not the wonderfully minute and searching analysis of the inmost souls of the miserable beings who people this Inferno: it is the inexhaustible sympathy and compassion with which the author writes of them, revealing the divine spirit in the most degraded—a sympathy and compassion which never relieves itself in

words, but which inspires the whole book and glorifies it.

Whoever has read the strange and thrilling work of Dostoyevsky, 'Crime and Chastisement,' can perhaps imagine something of the manner in which he would treat such a subject as that of 'Krotkaïa' (Paris: Plon & Nourrit; New York: Christern). "Imagine a husband in the presence of the body of his dead wife, a few hours only after she has thrown herself out of a window." Dostoyevsky begins his exposition in this way in a short preface to the book. The husband is in extreme trouble, unable to collect his thoughts, going over to himself all that has happened confusedly, justifying himself, accusing his wife for the past, recalling all their life together from the beginning, all that has led to the catastrophe. Gradually all the past becomes clear to him; he sees it truly and his own part in it. The *terrible romancier*, as M. de Vogüé calls him, has here a subject suited to his powers. Such an exposition might seem to promise a repulsive book, something tumultuous and horrible. It is almost calm and all the more impressive. It is not painful to read. It is not agreeable, but it shows the strange and powerful writer in one of his most characteristic moods, and it is a marvellous study of the human soul.

In a recent number of the *Revue Contemporaine* there appeared some very striking pages entitled "Le Grand Inquisiteur." They were taken from the last work written by Dostoyevsky, 'Les Frères Karamasoff,' which M. Victor Derély is now translating, and which is announced for approaching publication by Plon & Nourrit in their series of the complete works of the author. The passage published is complete in itself. One of the brothers relates to the other the subject of a kind of philosophical or theological poem, 'Christ in Spain.' The simplicity and unadorned directness of the style in which he expresses his thought, the grandeur of the form in which he embodies it, the gradual gathering up and unfolding of the idea in one unbroken conception without a flaw or stain upon its unity, is something marvellous. It is the highest point to which Dostoyevsky has attained in anything yet translated. The luminous beauty of this prose poem can best be realized by a comparison which readily suggests itself with the 'Torquemada' of Victor Hugo, or his 'Fin de Satan.'

Richard Steele. By Austin Dobson. [English Worthies.] London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1886.

THE discovery of Steele in the character of an English Worthy, instead of Man of Letters, has a touch of the same humorous surprise in it that his comrades of the mess must have felt at his original appearance in literature as *The Christian Hero*. In his own day he found it a hard matter to deserve that reputation—to be a wit of the coffee-house was the easy thing; now the tables are turned, it seems, and the too humanly complying Captain of the Life-Guards, denied the boon companionship of Swift and Addison under the literary editing of our century, turns up among the worshipfuls. His heart, we may be sure, would swell with the new title, could he be made to think it belonged to him. Mr. Dobson does his best to make the reader think so. He knows very well, however, that his is not the usual task of the biographer of a previous age, merely to evoke the spirit of a dead mortal: the historian and the novelist have been beforehand with him, and when the literary imagination has seized upon a character of the past, truth has as little chance against its illusions as against a popular hero. Macaulay's sinister dislike and Thackeray's warm affection have created a Steele for us; and, different as their judgments are, the divergence

springs' rather from their temperaments than from their conceptions of the culprit's career. Mr. Dobson suggests that Steele, in this character of the culprit, whether graceless or humbly apologetic, is not a justifiable representation of the whole man, and that the flings of the one and the condonements of the other of the great literary portrait-painters are too much in one tone of color. For himself, he has tried, though against tremendous rhetorical odds, to give us only a natural picture.

Had it not been for some intricacies in his career, and the entanglement of his fame in consequence of that famous foreign alliance by which he called Addison to his aid, Steele's character would never have seemed anything but simple. It is not even rare, except for the excess of its attractiveness and that subtle power which the literary gift seems to blend with the other elements of human nature. Indeed, Thackeray was able to idealize it so plausibly because it approaches so near to a general type. Mr. Dobson analyzes it briefly into a weak will and an honest purpose; and this conjunction, as in the case of other people, frequently brought Steele into trouble. Furthermore, his own lips and the lips of his enemies, and fortune in the shape of hundreds of his familiar letters, made his affairs the open gossip of Queen Anne's taverns and our own libraries. It was perhaps a disadvantage to him that he always "owned up" and ate humble pie. His reputation affords a striking instance of the damaging effects of self-depreciation, not only in his life, but in literature. Of the trio, Swift had more mind, Addison more cultivation—vastly more; and Steele was as destitute of the contemplative serenity of the one as of the intellectual fury of the other. But he was distinguished from both as being the man of heart, the lovable one, the one "like unto ourselves." Mr. Dobson has indicated this primary quality in Steele while discussing Addison's superiority as a "classical" writer; "but," he says, "for words which the heart finds when the head is seeking; for phrases glowing with the white heat of a generous emotion; for sentences which throb and tingle with manly pity or courageous indignation, we must turn to the essays of Steele." Style, of this sort, is one of the great virtues of a writer.

Nor did Steele lack a second great virtue, invention. If one were disposed to cavil, he might smile at this, and remind us of the search Steele made in the beginning of his career for the philosopher's stone, and of the fish-pool patent he took out at the end of it; and truly he had his share of the follies that attend projectors, among whom he is placed by his fertility and the restless practical energy that belonged to his mercurial temperament. But the eighteenth-century essay was a project of another sort, and Steele did originate and conduct it—one of the distinct historic forms of English literature; and, moreover, this involved the invention of light social satire, domestic genre-painting, and all the other forms in which he was the adventurer before Addison came to occupy the land. Though the country perpetuated the name of Americus, let us remember who discovered it. And Steele, in doing this, was not only the forerunner of Addison, to whom at his best he is as superior in feeling as at his worst he is inferior in finish; he wrote what Goldsmith read, and ushered in the novelists. But one should not push too far the advantage a man holds by virtue of his historical position in the tendency of a literary age, and we fear that we are too readily falling into the strain of those writers whose papers on Steele are made up of apologies and claims—a strain which Mr. Dobson himself, with all his watchfulness, cannot wholly avoid. It is so natural to love Steele, and to feel that in the world's hurly-burly for justice he is

irretrievably the under-dog, that one's pen pleads for him before the head is aware, and, like Lord Finch, "could fight for this man."

Mr. Dobson masks his batteries, but they are there, and they play silent havoc on all those who have undervalued Steele's part in the Queen Anne time, whether in the hen-pecking manner of Macaulay or with the patronizing charity of our much-beloved Thackeray. It behooves the reader to be wary, or he may suddenly be believing that possibly Steele was a better man than he thought himself; that the political fervor which made him a partisan, and drew the rancor of faction on his name, was patriotic duty; that the moral sense which made him denounce gamblers and duelling, his indignation at wrong, his pity for the suffering, and the quick alliance of his sympathy with the weak, which made him in no sentimental sense the friend of humanity; and especially that his loyalty to an ideal yet human virtue, which made him such a censor of the town that he pleased them with the wholesome truth about themselves—the reader, we say, may begin to know that these are in fact the traits of an English Worthy, and not of the traditional Culprit, the Steele of fiction. He may even find himself admiring instead of forgiving him; and if at the end, when all is done, and the pretty Welsh scene near the death, and the dance after-piece which Mr. Dobson provides, are both over, he coolly remembers the Captain of Life-Guards and the Lover-Gazetteer and the Sir Knight at Edinburgh, and cannot quite make up his mind that Steele was a hero, after all, yet he will surely think of him more truthfully, and recognize in him more manhood for this life of him. That one prefers to think of him as a man of letters, with the failings and brilliancies and the human charm that belong to that quality, is no diminution of praise.

*La Religion à Rome sous les Sévères.* Par Jean Réville. Paris: Ernest Leroux. 1886. 8vo, pp. 302.

STUDENTS of the history of religion will find in M. Réville's treatise a very interesting and, we think, to most a wholly novel chapter of that history. The reign of Septimius Severus formed, as readers of Gibbon know, an important epoch in the Roman Empire. Since Gibbon wrote, we have been taught more fully and precisely the nature of the constitutional and social changes at this period which gave it this importance. From M. Réville we learn that the religious and theological changes of these years were no less marked and decisive.

The principal facts in this connection are, to be sure, not wholly new. That Elagabalus was a priest of the sun, and that he did not cease to be a priest by being crowned Emperor; that Alexander Severus had in his chapel images of Christ and Abraham by the side of those of Orpheus and Apollonius of Tyana—are familiar facts. But their bearing, as parts of a great *syncretic* movement which culminated at this period, has, we think, never been so fully shown before. Even "Syncretism"—the sense of the oneness of religions—was not really new. It was the same thing when Greeks or Romans adopted the deities of other countries, or identified their own deities with them. When the Romans borrowed Apollo from Greece and Isis from Egypt; when they recognized that Athena was Minerva and Thor Jupiter, these were acts of syncretism—a distinct step towards an understanding of the universality of law and the unity of the deity. The growth of this conception was slow and gradual. It reached its culmination at the beginning of the third century; and when the pagan syncretism of the Severi broke down, it found Christianity just prepared to occupy the

ground which it was itself incapable of filling. The pointing out of the relation between this pagan syncretism and the growth and triumph of Christianity is one of the most interesting points in this book.

The character of pagan syncretism appears well displayed in this sentence (p. 168):

"Where we say at the present time, 'to the sovereign God who reigns in the heavens, who disseminates light and inspires wisdom, the God who dispenses war and peace,' etc.; the pagan syncretist said, 'to Jupiter Greatest and Best, to Juno, Apollo (or Sol), Minerva, Mars (or the Genius of Victory), Peace,' etc."

An interesting point of detail (p. 93):

"The cult of Mithra offers the greatest analogy with that of the gnostics. It was in reality a pagan gnosticism, with its theories upon the evolution of souls and its procedures to assure their return to the upper world. It had its vast ambitions and its puerilities, its combination of elevated views and superstitions."

The closest analogies with Christianity are explained in the following passages:

"A new sentiment thus takes possession of the religious conscience of paganism. . . . It is a moral conviction which offers the greatest analogies with the sense of sin among Christians, and which is, so to speak, its pagan expression. It is believed that there are in human nature bad, impure elements; appetites and passions which, while natural, are none the less impious—only, instead of attributing the origin of these bad tendencies to a bad use of liberty, they are explained from the very constitution of human nature. They abandon themselves more and more to dualism; matter on one side, source of evil, and spirit on the other side, source of good and of life; on the one side the body with its passions, on the other the soul with its higher aspirations" (p. 152).

"Apologists for and detractors of Christianity would have spared themselves many discussions if they had taken account of the numerous facts which testify to this truth [the existence of this sentiment]. It is no more suitable to pay honor to Christianity alone for this awakening of the religious conscience, than to hold it alone responsible for the ascetic customs and institutions which were its consequence. Christianity and paganism were carried along in the same current, but the bark of Christ was better suited to such navigation than the vessel of paganism, which was accustomed to sail in other waters" (p. 153).

The details of this pagan revival are narrated with great fulness and vivacity. It was, as is shown, inspired and guided by four women of Asiatic birth, whose relations to the imperial throne gave them an opportunity to exert an unusual influence upon the religious thought of their age. These were Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus and mother of Caracalla; her sister, Julia Mæsa; and the two daughters of the latter, Julia Soemias, mother of Elagabalus, and Julia Mamaea, mother of Alexander Severus. The characterization of these four women is very interesting from a purely historical point of view. The two elder sisters, Domna and Mæsa, were alike ambitious and imperious. Domna exercised great influence in the reigns of her husband and son, while Mæsa ruled in the name of her grandson, Elagabalus. The two younger sisters were very unlike: Soemias was weak and voluptuous, like her worthless son; Mamaea, of the purest and noblest type of women, worthy of her virtuous son. In each of these three again—leaving out Julia Soemias, who appears to have been a nullity—syncretism took an individual and peculiar shape. It was under Julia Domna that the name and sanctity of Apollonius of Tyana came into currency—as a kind of rival to Christ, some think, but M. Réville thinks not. Julia Mæsa aimed, through the priest-emperor Elagabalus, to introduce a syncretism resting upon the supremacy of the sun-god, El Gabal. Julia Mamaea and her son, Alexander Severus, worshipped a syncretism composed of the saints of all times and all religions. Of this culminating period of paganism—a higher religious level,