

comfort if some of its items had not so laboriously to be explained away; yet all hasten to add that the time has not yet come for any change.

One reason why they do not feel it imperative that there should be a change, and the most effective of all the palliatives, is to be found in the fact that subscription is nowhere taken so seriously as it used to be. That is to say, what was attempted for clergymen of the Church of England in the act of 1865 has been quietly and almost insensibly brought into practice in this country. An ambiguous assent, in general terms, is everywhere substituted for the older strict acceptance of the letter. In few cases has this come about through any distinct ecclesiastical action. It is simply custom gradually gaining the force of law. Men now assent to creeds as a "system," "as a whole," and feel at perfect liberty to reject certain parts—a considerable number of parts, sometimes—parts once, at least, thought vital to the system.

Probably the most conspicuous instance of such an assent is the subscription to the Articles of the Episcopal Church in the United States by its candidates for orders, which is, so to speak, by indirection, that is, by engagement "to conform to the doctrines and worship" of that Church. None of its clergymen are held strictly bound by the merely formal assent they give before ordination. A prominent clergyman of that Church felt entire freedom to say of the Articles, publicly, that they "are not generally approved." It is clear that, in such a case, subscription cannot be felt as a burden. Similarly, though in a less degree, has it fared with the Presbyterian churches. Since the reunion of the Old with the New School branch, an acknowledged, if not a strictly legal, latitude has been attached to subscription to the Westminster Confession. Certainly the Presbyterian subscription is allowed to mean some things in New York city which it would not be allowed to mean in Pittsburgh. It is allowed to mean some things in Pittsburgh which it would not be allowed to mean in South Carolina. If a young man seriously asks what forms and shades of doctrine are essential to the system to which his assent is required, the highest Presbyterian authority will tell him that it is an unsettled question. But if he wanted to find out what the entire Church would consider to be the heretical among several competing opinions, his only way would be to try to carry a case through all the church courts. This will not be found exactly a royal road to knowledge.

Now, it would be a mistake to infer that the condition of things thus outlined shows moral looseness on the part of those concerned. The ministers and authorities of the churches are not guilty of playing fast and loose with such solemn obligations. The difficulty is rather in a complete oversight of the question. The vast majority show themselves unwilling to take steps to remove what a few feel to be a grave defect, because the vast majority do not perceive that any defect exists. Their minds are directed almost exclusively to other aspects of ministerial life. Their profession is an exacting and absorbing pursuit. Matters of immediate practical concern loom

up so large that remote and delicate questions, like the one in hand, are not seen. It may be safely said that the matter of subscription to a creed is a thing to which the great mass of clergymen do not give many minutes of thought in a year. To most of them the whole affair is *res adjudicata*; they signed the creed so many years ago, at ordination or installation, and since then they have not bothered their heads about it. If you talk to them about church extension, about missions, about the relation of laboring men to the churches, you find them awake and interested; but if you once begin on the question of subscription, it strikes them like a particularly dry bit of ancient history.

BYRON'S CENTENARY.

THE absence of any widespread interest in the centenary of Lord Byron, which occurred on Sunday, is a marvellous illustration of the vicissitudes of literary reputation. Only in Greece was public notice taken of it. The brilliancy with which his fame burst forth, the unexampled rapidity with which it spread through Europe, the powerful influence it continued to exert on the youth of the next age, were to the men who witnessed them, sure signs of the magnitude of his future renown. The decadence into which it has fallen would have been incredible to them. But so far are we from that strong impression of his genius that the comical incident of his grandson, Lord Wentworth's, feeling himself called on to protest against any public notice of the illustrious poet from whom he sprang, excites only a feeling of amusement, and seems a kind of caricature of the irony of fate. It was Byron's distinction to have been the first man of letters who enjoyed an international reputation at once; and one can hardly credit the fact that he has shrunk so wonderfully. In the month that he died Sir Walter Scott, in a brief article which attracted wide attention, said that it seemed almost as if the sun in heaven had been extinguished; and when Scott soon followed him, Landor, writing to Crabb Robinson, remarked that the death of these two had "put the fashionable world into deep mourning," and drew gloomy predictions, in the well-known manner of contemporaries, because the great men were leaving no successors.

Something of the shock of Byron's death and of the exaltation of his genius at the moment was due to the manner in which he met his end; he had fallen like one of his own heroes, died in a cause, and appealed to the romantic feeling of the age. Even then, however, to admire him was found to be a different thing from approving him. When the thirty-seven guns had been fired at Missolonghi, and the Turks had responded with "an exultant volley," and the ship had brought home the remains, the Abbey was refused, and he was buried in the common soil of England. Two incidents of the funeral bring him very near to us. Lady Caroline Lamb met the cortège as she was driving, and, on being told, in answer to her question, that it was Byron's, fainted in

her carriage; and Mary Shelley, as she saw the procession winding down, reflected on the short-sightedness of human life, asking who could have foretold at Lerici such changes as she had witnessed in two short years.

Hobhouse could raise only a thousand pounds for a memorial with all his efforts, but with this he got Thorwaldsen to make a statue which was sent to England in 1834. The Abbey was again refused, and, to the discredit of the nation, this work was allowed to remain stored away in the Custom-house eleven years, because no fit place could be got to put it. At last, in 1845, Dr. Whewell gave permission to set it up in the Library of Trinity, which it still adorns. Thirty years later came the miserable fiasco of Beaconsfield's Committee, which, far from making Newstead Abbey a national possession and gathering there the relics of Byron, placed in Hamilton Park (other sites being refused) that statue of the poet leaning on the rocks, with his dog Boatswain beside him, which can only be described as popular melodrama in stone, beautiful only for the mass of red marble which the Greek Government gave for its base. It is to be remarked, also, that at this time the Abbey was a third time practically refused, as Dean Stanley, out of respect to the action of his two predecessors, but not apparently for any other reason, precluded application for erecting a tablet there by a letter in which he said he preferred the subject should not be brought before him.

The history of monuments, however, is not necessarily proof of fame. Others of England's greatest do not sleep in the Abbey, and the hero not infrequently waits for his statue a long age. The place of fame is on the lips of men, and Macaulay, when Moore's Life came out, could speak of Byron as "the most celebrated man in Europe." The decline of his vogue was nevertheless rapid and unmistakable. We all remember Carlyle's oracle—"Close thy Byron; open thy Goethe." This must have been about 1840. But, unfortunately, as one writer observes, to open Goethe is to return to Byron's greatness. Did not Goethe tell Eckermann that a man of Byron's eminence would not come again, nor—save the mark!—such a tragedy as "Cain"? He thought him greater than Milton—"vast and widely varied," whereas the latter was only simple and stately. Perhaps, as we have been told, Goethe was flattered by Byron's imitation.

Whatever was the reason, the critical judgment of Goethe is one to be weighed with regard to Byron, and to himself, also, for that matter. What part Goethe's praise may have had in making Byron the hero of "Young Germany" we have no means of determining, but his works were vital in the new age there, and still his hold seems greater on the Germans, if we may judge by the test of translations and biography, than it is elsewhere on the Continent. Heine was more than touched by him, though he was far from being his duplicate, and could see the humorous side of those young Parisians—Musset the foremost—who were melancholy in the

full glow of first manhood, and went about in despair dining sumptuously every day. One pities Musset, for Byron was, as much as another man can be, the secret of his fate. Lamartine caught only the sentimentality of Byron, but Musset assimilated his darker spirit, his recklessness, and license, and scepticism, and transmuted his very coarseness into a Parisian vulgarity. Stendhal and Sainte-Beuve paid tribute to him; and, to cut the subject short, Mazzini thanked him in the name of Italy, in Spain Espronceda drew his inspiration from him, and Castelar in the later time eulogized him for his liberating influences in the peninsula with Spanish amplitude of phrase. Karl Elze thinks that the Russian poet, Pushkin, was his child; if it were so, Byron might well be proud of what such an influence was the beginning of in Russia. This rapid survey, with its brilliant names, impresses the mind with the range and dominance of this man, of whom Landor's sneer, when he hoped that "the mercies which have begun with man's forgetfulness may be crowned with God's forgiveness," does not now seem so absurd as formerly.

To look at the matter from this point of view, however, is to confuse Byron with Byronism. There was a European mood, a temperament of the revolutionary time, that fed on Byron, but he was not its creator, and to regard him as more than a single influence of many that moulded the young men of the next generation, is to give him vastly more than his due. This is the secret of his vogue in Europe—not that he liberated their minds, but that he set the fashion for minds expanding in a new age of intellectual pride and moral irresponsibility, helped to form their attitude, and was a rallying name for the faction. He was licentious, but he was neither democratical nor atheistical; he had no body of opinions properly thought out and correlated with social facts, either in politics or religion; he had no strong convictions even; but, with prejudices of rank and reminiscences of Scottish theology from which he could not free himself, he was an impulsive and therefore uneven revolter from the old régime, and never quite at home in the new camp. He preferred, he said, to be beheaded by the King and not by the mob; and the whole aristocrat spoke in the saying. Shelley wrote of him, "The canker of aristocracy needs to be cut out," and he hits off Byron's inconsequence in religion where he speaks of him under the name of Maddalo and contrasts him with himself. Maddalo, he says, took a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion; but, he adds, "What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known." Byron is believed to have talked with Shelley more seriously than with any other man. He did not himself know what he thought; and his state of mind was well expressed by his remark to Lady Byron, "The trouble is, I do believe." As Stevenson lately observed, the old Gordon blood was strong in him. In substance, therefore, unlike Shelley, who was democratical and atheistical on principle, Byron was far from

being the ideal of the various "young" nationalities, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, in the principal tenets dear to the age. It was rather his personality, and what they transformed him into by their worship, that had power over them in their search for "liberty"; and truly, though his ideas were incomplete and fragmentary, and inextricably blended, even in their formation, with his impulses and the accidents of his position as a pariah of genius, yet there was a contagion in his spirit, a dash of energy and of abandon, that told as blood tells more than thought.

One advantage, too, Byron had with foreign nations that with his own counts as a defect. He had no form, no art, no finish; and the poet who failed in these things can be read in our day only by a kind of sufferance, and with continual friction with what has come to be our mastering literary taste for perfection in the manner. It follows from this defect that he bore translation better than he otherwise would. His quality is power, not charm; the mood, and the situation, and the thought are the elements that count in his poetry, while the words are at the best eloquent or witty, but not "the living garment of light." The result was, that he could be given almost completely in a foreign language; he lost practically nothing. This consideration may go far to explain the relative estimate of him by foreign writers in comparison with other English poets; for these others who have the charm that cannot be transfused, the art that will obey no master but its own Prospero, are seen, as one may say, without their singing robes; and their poetry, made prose, loses half its excellence. This, together with the German element in one portion of his work and the strong Italian influence in a larger portion, especially in 'Don Juan,' must be taken into account in any attempt to understand why he was the best known English poet on the Continent, and perhaps, with the exception of Shakspeare, still is.

In England, Byron's reputation met with rapid decline from natural causes. It is not likely that his misconduct in morals was much against him, and Beaconsfield was wholly on the wrong track when he reminded the Byron meeting that, after half a century, a man's private life scarcely enters into the estimate of his literary genius. It seems rather Byron's lack of orthodoxy that England most resented. Society put up with much libertinism in those days in high quarters; but Byron had attacked the faith, or at least elements of it which the Church shared in common with Calvinism, and this was too shocking a matter for a society which found hardly more than matter for gossip in natural sons and daughters. This was the reason which a bishop alleged in the House of Lords in answer to Brougham, in the debate on the second refusal of the Abbey. Byron had attacked Christianity, and he should not be interred "in the Temple of our God." The middle classes have always rejected Byron, in like manner, because he scoffed, though, no doubt, his life and the licentious portions of his poetry also offended

them. From the first his scepticism was heavily against him, and probably it still remains the strongest objection to his works in the minds of Englishmen generally. In Landor's bitter attack (he had offended Landor by rhyming his name with *gander*) this charge is made the climax, and the passage is brief enough to quote as the best word of Byron's enemies:

"Afterwards, whenever he wrote a bad poem, he supported his sinking fame by some signal act of profligacy: an elegy by a seduction, a heroic by an adultery, a tragedy by a divorce. On the remark of a learned man that irregularity is no indication of genius, he began to lose ground rapidly, when, on a sudden, he cried out at the Haymarket, *There is no God*. It was then surmised more generally and more gravely that there was something in him, and he stood upon his legs almost to the last. Say what you will, once whispered a friend of mine, there are things in him strong as poison and original as sin."

This, with all its excess, is no inapt character of Byron, as English prejudice drew him.

On the other hand, much that was in his favor at first was necessarily temporary. The man had a story. He was one of the picturesque characters of the age, and while he lived he was interesting to his time merely for his personal fortunes. It was to his gain, too, that he identified his own romance with that which he early invented, appealing to the adventurous in men and to the pity and admiration of women. His heroes are strong, and strength succeeds with the sex in fiction as well as in life; and they are, besides, usually faithful in love, while their crimes are taken out of the moral region of deliberate choice by a kind of emotional sophistry, and somehow are charged to their circumstances, so that the unwary and innocent reader commiserates their villainies instead of being revolted by them. These tales (and no part of his work was more popular) are trying reading to-day, but we forget too readily what raw and bloody fiction the world had in the first score years of this century; we cannot conceive how London ran after stories of blighted brigands and sentimental corsairs, in the very thunder of Waterloo. But so it was, and Byron was more interesting in that he was the unhappy and noble original from which the pirates of his imagination were drawn. If he changed the scene and wandered over Europe as Childe Harold, he gained in sentiment; if he wore the mask of Manfred, he gained in tragedy; and if he sneered in Don Juan, there was the jaded man of the world, perhaps more interesting. He was, moreover, a peer; but a dead peer certainly is no better than a dead lion, and when he died, why—the fashion in collars changed. Other living personalities occupied the stage; England grew steadily more sincere in religion, more strict in the standard of private morals, more exacting of seriousness in thought and of perfection in literary form; and all these influences were adverse to Byron, who made no offsetting gain in his own country from the revolutionary fervor that helped him on the Continent.

What is there left? Some stirring passages of adventure, some eloquent descriptions of nature, some personal lyrics of true poetic feeling, dramas which, it is to be hoped, have

finally damned "the unities," and one great poem of the modern spirit, 'Don Juan.' And what remains of that melodramatic Byron of women's fancies? His character has come out plain, and we are really amazed at it—proud, sensual, selfish, and, it must be added, mean. Ignoble he was, in many ways, but, for all that, the energy of his passions, his vitality, his masterly egotism, and the splendid force of his genius, made him a commanding name and stamped him upon the succeeding European time. He cannot be neglected by history, but men certainly appear to pass him by. Arnold has endeavored to bring him back by a collection; but Arnold's critical views on poetry seem to be justifications in age for the tastes he had when he was young—reasons after the act. A late biographer thinks that the decadence of his fame is due to the conservatism of the last half-century, and that in the revolutionary age that ought soon to be beginning, he will retrieve himself. But can this be hoped of a "revolutionary" poet whom Swinburne has cast aside? The prediction does not convince us. Byronism has gone by, and the age of the "enlightenment" in Germany and France; such a mood is not repeated. Goethe outlived Wertherism, but had Byron such good fortune? In his own character there are such defects as forbid admiration in the light of our moral ideas; and in his poems, taken apart from their time, there are other defects, both in their substance and, unquestionably, in their form, which forbid the sort of approval that would make them in a true sense classic, as a whole, though the qualities that make 'Childe Harold' and 'Don Juan' great, and preserve here and there passages in other poems, are those that confer immortality. He was a poet; he was a force, also, that spent itself partly in creating a world-wide affectation, and partly in rousing and reinforcing the impulse of individual liberty on the Continent; but he is a poet no one can love, and he left a memory that no one can admire, and there is none of his works that receives the meed of perfect praise. And, as to the fruits of that vast influence, is it hard to say whether they were more good than evil? At all events, it is certain now that Sir Walter indulged in a tremendous hyperbole when he likened Byron's extinction to that of the sun in heaven.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN NEW YORK CITY.

NEW YORK, January 21, 1888.

At the present moment there are from New York city and suburbs two women students at Cornell, four at Bryn Mawr, thirteen at Smith, seventeen at Vassar (besides fifteen in preparation for it), and thirty-one at Wellesley; making a total of fifty-seven students coming this year from New York city or some place whence they could easily attend a day college in New York. And if fifty-seven girls can leave their homes and encounter the discomforts of an independent life for the sake of pursuing a collegiate education, how many would attend college gladly, enthusiastically, were it not necessary to face the obstacle of leaving home? It is certain that where fifty New York mothers

would consent to their sons leaving home to study at Harvard or Yale, only four or five of them would permit their daughters to attend Wellesley or Vassar. The principal of one of the best schools for young ladies, a school where the pupils are fitted conscientiously for a collegiate curriculum, told me the other day that, though she has only lately begun, she has sixty-five pupils (including two grades, seniors and juniors), and that, of the seniors, sixteen from this city are about to enter some college (Wellesley, Smith, or Bryn Mawr), and at least five more are wofully bemoaning their fate because their parents will not allow them to leave their homes.

For the last thirteen years there has existed a "Society to Encourage Studies at Home." It merely aims to encourage women to study by a system of correspondence between teacher and pupil. It wisely supposes that there are a great many women who have a taste for study, but cannot leave their homes to attend college. A pupil can study as much as she thinks she is able, and can become as proficient as she wishes in any branch of knowledge that is capable of being studied at home, and without a tutor upon the scene. No degrees are given, but a certificate stating exactly what has been studied, and with what success. The teachers are women of culture and refinement, and correspondence with them is a great boon. Of the women in New York who are longing for something definite to do in the way of study, and are prevented from attending college because there is none in the city, thirty-three pursue this course, besides thirty-six others that live in the vicinity, thus making a total of sixty-nine girls in New York and vicinity who are studying by this method for lack of better.

Sixteen hundred girls go to Normal College. Out of these 1,600, only a small number become teachers, and that is the object and worth of the college—to turn out teachers. The curriculum at Normal does not satisfy the demand in women for a complete collegiate course; seven graduates of Normal College are now studying at Columbia. It is commonly supposed that only parents who could not afford to pay tuition fees send their children to Normal College. On the contrary, a very large number of the parents could easily afford it, and would gladly send their daughters to a private college where a higher curriculum and degrees could be procured. For such as cannot afford to pay tuition, President Hunter tells me he is very anxious to secure the right of conferring degrees as the New York College for boys has the right. He would also alter and improve the present curriculum of Normal College, having an Art course for such as would care to take the degree B.A., a Normal course for such as would care to become teachers, and possibly an Industrial course for such as would wish to earn their living as artisans.

There exists also an apology for a collegiate course for women held out by Columbia College. There have been thirty-eight girls who began that course. During the four years, eight have dropped from the ranks—either from discouragement at the slender advantages offered and many difficulties to contend against, or perhaps from nervous dread of encountering the phalanx of staring youths; one girl has graduated and received her certificate, and one more has put argument into the mouths of the enemy by leaving the course to enter upon married life. Thus, with wonderful perseverance, twenty-eight girls have continued to take the course. These twenty-eight girls have worked nobly, actuated by the sentiment that a principle was at stake. They felt that they were there on trial, on probation;

several of them, though deriving but little benefit from their labors, still kept on, hoping that their perseverance would finally induce the trustees to open to the women students the full privileges of the college.

By a resolution of the trustees of Columbia College adopted June 8, 1883, it was ordered that "a course of collegiate study equivalent to the course given to young men in the college, should be offered to such women as may desire to avail themselves of it, to be pursued under the general direction of the Faculty of the College, in accordance with the following principles, and regulations," etc. This read excellently—it seemed as if the long-talked-of loaf was at last to be thrown to the women; but, alas! it soon turned out to be a stone, and of a particularly indigestible quality. These "principles and regulations" simply were to the effect that the women could pursue their studies wheresoever and howsoever they pleased, except under the sacred roof of Columbia. Their unhallowed presence was not for an instant to be sanctioned in the laboratory or lecture-room. All that concerned Columbia was that the women were to be present at its examinations twice a year, and to be able to answer certain questions, which questions satisfactorily answered, they were at liberty to return home again and prepare for the next set of questions.

It is no easy task for a girl to study alone, unaided by tutor or professor, and prepare for examination papers more difficult than had the boys, inasmuch as the examinations for women were prepared from the entire range of the books, and the examinations for men prepared only from lectures, the particular bent of which had become familiar. Yet twenty-eight New York girls are now doing it.

A couple of years later the trustees passed a resolution allowing the college to confer degrees on women if they had in all respects followed the full equivalent to the boys' course—in all respects except the important ones of attending lectures and working in the laboratories. Is it to be wondered at that only two or three have essayed to gain a degree of B.A. or B.L. under such conditions?

The women have been admitted, during the past couple of winters, to lectures given at Columbia on Saturday mornings. Prof. Boyesen, Prof. Charles Sprague Smith, Dr. Butler, Dr. Titus M. Coan, and others have been heard with great enthusiasm each week by some 200 ladies, and many applicants for tickets were obliged to be refused. Some years ago several professors were in the habit of inviting a few ladies to attend their lectures. The ladies enthusiastically availed themselves of the invitations, and were among the most ardent listeners. Among the ladies invited were some members of the President's family and a daughter of one of the trustees. All was going smoothly when, unfortunately, the trustee in question in an evil moment was seized with the desire to read the Constitution and By-laws of the College. To his horror he found that, in allowing his daughter to attend the lectures at Columbia, he was violating the laws of the college! He at once withdrew his daughter; the President could scarcely permit his relatives to remain, so he was obliged to follow the example of the trustee, and soon there was not a woman left.

The President called a meeting of the trustees and read them the resolution passed some years ago by them, and essayed to prove that the admittance of women to the lectures was not against its spirit, but only the letter of it. The resolution was to the effect that no person should be allowed to attend the lectures of the