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latter misleading," could not be maintained without blasphemy. Lord Bramwell was of the same opinion.

"This last decision," says Mr. Justice Stephen, "is strong to show that the true legal doctrine upon the subject is that blasphemy consists in the character of the matter published, and not in the manner in which it is stated."

We must leave the matter here. We have endeavoured to place it fairly before the public. The vital importance of the principles at stake certainly entitles them to the careful consideration of all Christian people. Nothing could be more mischievous than the notion that "the law grows," unless strictly limited to its only true sense. The immortal principles of justice remain as unchanged and unchangeable as their Divine Author, and such are the true foundation of the common law of England. The statute law of man's construction is, it is true, fitted to the needs of the times; and what a helpless jumble of inconsistencies it is! But the Common Law of England, which is founded on the law of God, knows no such changes, and one of its immortal principles is, as judges old and new have said, that "Christianity is part and parcel of the law of England." In this connection the words of Blackstone have great significance:[1]

"The preservation of Christianity as a national religion is, abstracted "from its own intrinsic truth, of the utmost consequence to the civil "state: which a single instance will sufficiently demonstrate. The belief "of a future state of rewards and punishments, the entertaining just "ideas of the moral attributes of the Supreme Being, and a firm per- "suasion that He superintends and will finally compensate every action "in human life (all which are clearly revealed in the doctrines and forcibly "inculcated by the precepts of our Saviour Christ), these are the grand "foundation of all judicial oaths; which call God to witness the truth "of these facts, which perhaps may be only known to Him and the party "attesting: therefore all confidence in human veracity must be weakened "by apostasy and overthrown by total infidelity."

A Barrister-at-Law.

Art. VI.—JOTTINGS FROM MONASTIC ANNALS.

THERE is not much difference of opinion among Church History writers of any school as to the original value of monasteries. The hermit life attempted in the deserts of Egypt very soon had to be abandoned; and the recluses were drawn together into communities for the sake of mutual help, comfort,

[1] "Hist. Crim. Law," vol. ii., p. 474.

and instruction. The idea of the common life was at once eagerly welcomed and widely practised by the Church. Then began to show themselves the natural consequences of the association of good and bad in such communities; abuses began to appear. The good Benedict, from his home at Monte Cassino, endeavoured by his rule to repress the eccentricities and regulate the lives of those who had given themselves to the "religious" life; but in those wild and disturbed days the influence of his rule spread but slowly. We know that it scarcely reached England at all before the time of Dunstan, and what English monasteries were before that period we may learn from Bede. In his letter to Archbishop Egbert, Bede describes the monasteries of his day as the homes of all sorts of luxury and licentiousness. It became a favourite practice with a great lord or lady to found an establishment of this sort, of which they constituted themselves the superiors. The "rule" observed was simply their own will. In return for giving a shelter and support to the inmates they treated them just as they pleased. Morality was but little regarded. Drunkenness and unchastity were the common conditions of these houses—in fact, the charges brought against the religious houses of his day by Bede were quite as strong, or even stronger, than those afterwards brought against monasteries in the time of Henry VIII. The Reformation, introduced by Dunstan, got rid of most of these scandals; but what monasteries were—or what, at least, many of them were—in the eleventh century we may learn from St. Bernard. "I am struck with amazement," writes that devout ascetic,

as to how such excess in eating and drinking, in clothing, in bed-furniture, in equipages, in buildings, could become prevalent among monks. Now frugality is held to be avarice; sobriety, austerity; silence, moroseness. On the contrary, a loose way of living is held discreet, extravagance is called liberality, loquacity passes for affability, laughter for pleasantness, luxury and pride in dress and horses for an honourable sign, excessive decking of the couch is called neatness. No attention is paid to the Scriptures, jokes and merriment are all the care. As much as the jaws are occupied with the viand, so are the ears with idle talk. Dishes are heaped upon dishes to make up for the sole abstinence from flesh. Then there is a double supply of huge fishes. So great is the art of the cook that you may devour four or five dishes, and yet be not satisfied. The palate is cheated by new seasonings gradually to pass from one flavour to another with continual appetite. To mention eggs alone. Who can number the modes in which they are twisted and plied, with what zeal they are twisted this way or that way, now fried, now boiled, now stuffed, now mixed, now simple? The eyes are fed with colours, the palate is tickled with flavours. Why should I speak of water-drinking when even wine mixed with water is not tolerated? You may see at one dinner three or four times a half-filled cup carried round, so that

by the smelling and tasting of different wines and by careful proof, that one which is the strongest may be chosen. For clothing there is sought not what is most useful, but what is most fine in texture. I have seen an abbot with sixty horse or more in his train. Then they carry with them napkins, cups, basins, candlesticks, embroidered coverlets, designed not so much for covering as for ornamenting the bed.

This huge luxury St. Bernard endeavoured to check by means of the Cistercians, or White Monks. This order was intended to be very ascetic, to work hard in the fields, to have very plain buildings and churches, and to be rigidly abstemious in diet. Singularly enough it is to this ascetic order that we owe all our grandest monasteries and churches, such as Fountains, Tintern, Furness, and Vale Royal; and it was by the Cistercians that monastic luxury was carried to its greatest and most refined development. In the twelfth century lived a witty archdeacon of Oxford, named Walter Mapes; he devoted a great part of his rhyming energies, which were considerable, to satirizing the new order of White Monks, and some very hard things does he say of their avarice, their hollow pretences, and hypocrisy.

The popularity of the Cistercians was, however, very great; and for a long time almost every monastic house founded in England belonged to this order. The chief reason of this was that the Cistercians were entirely free from all episcopal superintendence; they were visited and governed exclusively by abbots of their own order. They might defy the bishops, many of whom had very little liking for monks, as they had, through the influence of St. Bernard, obtained the fullest exemptions from the Papal See. Even when a Papal interdict was on the land, and all other churches were shut up, the Cistercians might celebrate divine services. This brought upon them the especial vengeance of King John in the time of the great interdict at the beginning of the thirteenth century. As it was the boast of the Cistercian that, by the labour of his hands, he could dominate and subdue the most stubborn soil, the abbeys of this order are usually built in picturesque and secluded spots. Many of our readers are familiar with the picturesque ruins of Rievaulx, but some perhaps have never heard the story of the touching incident which gave birth to this beauteous pile in the Yorkshire Wolds. The famous Norman knight, Walter Espec—whom the Chroniclers describe as "active and fair to behold"—married in early manhood a beauteous wife named Adelina; this lady bore him one son, a boy who resembled his father in beauty of person and devotion to manly sports. The youth's especial delight was to ride the swiftest horses at the most headlong speed. One day, when he was rushing along at a mad pace, his horse fell with him "near the

little cross towards Frithby," and he broke his neck; the father, overwhelmed with grief, and having no heir for his numerous manors, founded, as a mark of his contrition under affliction, three religious houses, two of them for monks of the Cistercian Order. These two were Rievaulx and Wardon, both of which became very famous among monasteries. Then the baron prospered mightily; another son was born to him; his riches increased. He gave great dowries to his three sisters, married to famous knights, and lived for thirty years in the greatest prosperity; then in his old age he put on the Cistercian habit, and died as a Rievaulx monk in the odour of sanctity. Such is the story of the foundation of Rievaulx. What version of it the English proprietors of the soil, who had been dispossessed by the Norman baron, adopted we are unable to say. The circumstances of the birth of the glorious pile of Fountains are, perhaps, still more interesting. The house of the Black Benedictines of York had become luxurious and negligent of its rule. The monks passed their time in amusement and recreation, and addicted themselves to "luxurious dishes, a great variety of pleasing drinks, and a costly fineness of apparel;" this suited the majority of them well enough, but there were some whose consciences were uneasy. Then came the news to the rich and luxurious abbey of St. Mary's of the hard life and coarse fare of the White Monks of Rievaulx. To thirteen of the brethren of the former the news came like a message from heaven. They determined to leave their pleasant quarters at York, and to go forth and settle in some wilderness; but the abbot, "an aged man, and not very learned," derided their scruples and opposed their secession. They sought out the archbishop. He was an impetuous person, and told the monks they should go whether the abbot liked it or not. He came to the abbey with his train. The abbot rallied his monks who were on the unreforming side, and a free fight took place within the walls of the abbey; the archbishop and his train were driven out, but he carried with him the thirteen monks who sought to be allowed to leave the walls. His object now was to get rid of them as quickly as possible, and so he conferred upon these ardent spirits "a place never inhabited in former times; a place overgrown with thorns, among steep mountains and jutting rocks, more fitted for the lairs of beasts than for the use of man." Here they lodged under a spreading elm tree, living on roots and herbs and any chance gifts of food, until they could rear some humble sheds and become affiliated to the new order then rapidly rising into popularity. In five years' time they had so prospered that they were sending parties to found affiliated houses.

What Fountains became we may all see for ourselves. At

the Dissolution its wealth was enormous. Its manors were to be reckoned by the hundred. Its plate was valued at £700, equal to fully £10,000 of our money. Its farm supported 2,356 horned cattle, 1,326 sheep, and 86 horses. Its buildings covered a space of twelve acres. Sometimes the endurance and self-denial of the early Cistercians did not prove equal to the manifold difficulties which beset them on founding a settlement. To a cause like this the beautiful abbey of Ford owed its existence. A Cistercian colony had been settled at Brightley, by Richard, Lord of Oakhampton. Their patron had erected buildings for them; but the land was so bad, or the monks were so unwilling to labour, that the whole party agreed to abandon the place and return to Waverley, their mother-house. In solemn procession, with their cross borne before them, the brethren passed on their way through the manor of Ford, and in sight of the manor-house, where dwelt Adelicia, the sister of the Lord Richard who had now succeeded to the estate. Hearing the cause of the migration, the lady was struck with contrition on account of the poorness of the gift which had been made by her brother. Straightway she offered to the brethren her own manor-house and the rich domain of Ford. This they were contented to accept, and dwelt there comfortably until an abbey was built for them. It soon, indeed, began to be discovered that the Cistercians were not specially devoted to barren spots and hard living. Thus the settlement at Otmoor abandoned their position for Thame, and that of Haverholme migrated to Louth Park. Pipewell, the famous Northamptonshire abbey, around which grew noble groves of oak, was, after some 200 years of occupation, held to be too poor a spot for the order, which by that time was well steeped in luxury. It is worth noting in what way the alleged poverty of the place had been brought about. "First of all," says the good monk who wrote the account of the abbey, "the brethren loved their fine trees as a mother loves her only son. They carried away the thorns and underwood in carts, or loaded upon the backs of their servants, for the purposes of fuel, but spared the fine timber. But afterwards, growing careless, they began to lop the branches and cut away the roots of the oaks for that purpose. Then everyone, whether layman or parson, who wanted to build a house in the neighbourhood, got an order for cutting timber in these woods; and the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages boldly made raids into the forest and cut and carried away the trees. Certain of the abbots also made a good thing of selling the timber, and clearances were made for arable and pasture land." These monks, who seem to have been of a rather unscrupulous character, were often involved in quarrels with the neighbour-

ing gentry, of which some amusing accounts will be found in Dugdale.

We turn now to a famous monastery of the unreformed order—the original Black Benedictines—and find some curious chapters of history. The Chronicle of Evesham has been published in a volume by itself, in the Rolls Series, and well deserves the care which has been bestowed upon it. It is, indeed, a most remarkable history; and as written by a man of no mean abilities, Thomas of Marlborough, who was monk and ultimately abbot there, is a most authentic story of a mediæval abbey. The unfortunate monks of this abbey were subjected, at the beginning of the twelfth century, to an abbot who was an utterly profligate reprobate. He oppressed them in every possible way, defrauded them of their food, kept them almost without clothes, allowed their buildings to fall into utter decay, while he himself revelled in luxury and all excesses on the proceeds of the abbey lands. At one time his persecutions had reached such a head that the monks seceded in a body; but the abbot pursued them with a posse of armed men, and after a fight drove them back again into the monastery. They appealed against him in every direction, but he managed always, by unblushing perjury, to thwart their complaints. At length, however, there came into England a Legate of the Pope who was not so easily to be baffled. Hearing of the state of things at Evesham, he repaired thither in person, and ordered the monks, in the presence of the abbot, to tell him the truth. Then at length the monk Thomas told his tale:

So scandalous (he said), is the life of our abbot, that it would be a sin to refuse to denounce it. Our sufferings have been so great that almost all regard for our rule has perished from among us. We do not observe the silence which St. Benedict enjoins, but we are continually employed in murmurs and lamentations. Our usual food is bread and water, and our bread is such that none of the pampered servants of the abbot would touch it. In summer we are often made to fast till noon, in winter till evening; never do we sit down to a meal in which some part of our proper fare is not lacking. Sometimes we have no ale, sometimes no salt, so that if perchance we get a few eggs, we are obliged to send one of them into the town to get a little salt to eat the rest. So much for our fare. But what is still worse, our religious services in the church have ceased, because we have neither frocks nor hoods nor other garments. In fact so destitute are we of clothes that we can go neither to the church, the cloister, nor the refectory, but remain in the infirmary. We cannot celebrate mass for want of breeches for the celebrant to wear, and it is not long since that the abbot, desiring to have a mass sung, was obliged to furnish the chaplain with a pair from his own wardrobe. The statutes of the order are quite disregarded by us. We are obliged to run through the country begging, and the name of our monastery is everywhere loaded with opprobrium, and the most evil accusations made

against us. There is no hospitality exercised in the abbey, for we have nothing to give when we ourselves and our servants are perishing for hunger. There is not a roof in the abbey that will keep out the rain, of which your holiness will have practical proof should it rain before your departure. The rents assigned for repairs have been embezzled by the abbot. This man hesitates not to commit simony by selling his patronage for money; he has committed murder, having caused a certain lay-brother who had left the house, to be seized and flogged to death in prison; he gives away the abbey lands to his relations as he pleases; he has involved the convent in debt to support his own extravagances. I grieve to say base things which I ought rather to conceal, but I am obliged to testify of his notorious incontinency, women being constantly with him in his chamber, and he having been guilty of unchastity not only with women married and unmarried, but also even with nuns.

This terrible chapter of accusations was found by the Legate to be strictly true, and the abbot was accordingly deposed and imprisoned. Probably, indeed, this case of Evesham was a very exceptional one; but taking merely the statements of monks themselves, and not trusting to outsiders for, perhaps, prejudiced accounts of them, we find some very remarkable things happening in monasteries. As the Cistercian Order declined in popularity, probably through the tendency towards easy living which they displayed, another order rose to great favour in England. These were not called monks, but canons, though in reality they differed scarcely at all from monks, save that they let the beard grow and wore a cap. In one other point they also differed. Monks might be, and usually were, laymen; canons must be in orders. The Augustinian, or Austin canons, became the favourites in England, and very many houses of them were founded in the fourteenth century. The annals of one of these, viz. Dunstable, have been recently published, and they disclose an extraordinary state of things as to the relations of this religious house with its neighbours. The canons were in a constant state of feud, not only with the townspeople of Dunstable, but with many of the landed proprietors round about. Their constant object seems to have been, either by fair means or foul, to get hold of the advowsons of churches. Being a community of priests, they could undertake the service of a church, while the revenues of it went into the common fund; or, if the incumbent was a foreigner and non-resident, they would "farm" the church for him, giving him so much annually, and getting what they could from the parish in return for the performance of the church services. The minute account given in this chronicle of the series of conflicts between the priory and the town is highly amusing, if not very edifying. The prior had obtained seignorial rights over the town, and so mercilessly were the people fleeced, that at length they rose in a general rebellion.

The prior called in the aid of the bishop, who ordered excommunications to be pronounced; but the people profanely replied, "They were excommunicated already, and they would rather remain so, and even go to hell, sooner than give way in the matter of the taxing."[1] At one time the people of Dunstable were seriously deliberating as to quitting their town altogether, and building themselves another habitation out of the reach of these persecuting neighbours.

To illustrate further the relations between monks and their neighbours, we turn to the Chronicle of Bartholomew de Cotton, a monk of Norwich. Under the year "1272," this monk has a sad tale to tell of the troubles which befell his monastery:

On the day of SS. Peter and Paul, at the hour when the convent sang Prime, there was a mighty storm of thunder and lightning, and the tower of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Norwich was struck with such force that huge stones were torn out of it in a way terrible to behold, and hurled to the earth. All the brethren fled in terror from the choir, except three, one of whom fell to the ground as though dead, and the others struggled hard to keep up the psalm until the remainder returned. It was thought by most that these things happened as a presage of the greater misfortune which was to follow. For, on the morrow of St. Laurence, the citizens of Norwich surrounded the monastery, and not being able to force an entrance, applied fire to the great gates to which a certain parish church adjoined, and burned them together with the church, and all its fittings, and images, and contents. At the same time they applied fire to the great alms-houses, to the gates of the abbey church, to the great bell tower; all of which, together with the bells, were burned. They burned the dormitory, the refectory, the guest-hall, the infirmary with its chapel, and almost all the buildings of the court. Very many belonging to the house, some of them sub-deacons, some clerks, some laymen, they slew in the cloister and within the precincts of the monastery; some they dragged out and put to death in the town, some they threw into prison. Entering into the monastery, they plundered all the sacred vessels, books, gold and silver, and vestments, which had not been consumed, and put to flight all the monks except two or three. For three days they continued their attack, burning, slaying and spoiling.

Of course vengeance was taken for this ferocious outbreak; but the time was the weak reign of Henry III., when justice was scarce in the land. A few insignificant criminals were dragged at the tails of horses and hanged, but the opulent citizens, who were most in fault, procured immunity by bribes; and turning the tables against the prior, accused him of many evil practices, so that he was committed to the bishop's prison, and the estates of the monastery were taken into the hands of the King. A similar outbreak to this at Norwich, occurred

[1] "Ann. de Dunstap." p. 122.

about the same time at the abbey of St. Swithun's at Winchester, when some of the monks were slain, and part of the monastic buildings consumed by fire. It is hardly, however, to be inferred that, as a rule, monasteries were unpopular with their neighbours. On some occasions we find the people taking up arms to defend them when attacked. This was the case in Bishop Grosseteste's assault on the famous abbey of Bardney. Here the abbot had become indebted to a certain clerk, and the creditor had applied to the archdeacon to recover the debt for him. The archdeacon summoned the abbot into his court; the abbot, standing upon his dignity, refused to appear. Then the bishop was appealed to, and the abbot, still declining to appear and plead, was excommunicated. Then the bishop sent a body of his people to take possession of the abbey. The doors were shut against them, and as soon as their errand became known there was such a general concourse of the people of the neighbourhood arming themselves for the attack that the bishop's party were forced to fly for their lives. One great source of influence with the great and powerful which the monasteries possessed, was the associations connected with their burial-grounds. It was held a thing much to be desired to be buried among the monks; and as the families of those who were thus buried were naturally interested in the religious house which had given a resting-place to their friends or ancestors, the monasteries eagerly sought to be allowed to pay the last honours to any distinguished or wealthy persons. The most violent rivalry sometimes arose on this point between the religious houses contending for the privilege of burying a deceased magnate. We have an amusing instance of this in the annals of Worcester Abbey, which illustrates also the bitter rivalry which existed between the old orders of monks and the new orders of friars, who differed altogether from the monks in their rules and manner of life. In the year 1289 died a certain wealthy citizen of Worcester named Henry de la Poche; the Franciscan Friars, who were very busy about death-beds, especially those of the rich, had been attending this man in his last illness, and when he died they claimed the right of interring his body in their cemetery. But it was well-known to the monks of the Benedictine Abbey of Worcester that the good citizen had often expressed his desire to be buried within the abbey cemetery; and so when the Franciscans endeavoured to obtain possession of the body the sacristan of the abbey appeared with a strong force, drove them away—probably not without inflicting some severe chastisement on them—carried away the corpse, and interred it in the abbey graveyard. But the Franciscans just at that time were dangerous persons to offend. The Archbishop of

Canterbury was of their order, and to him at once they carried their complaints. The archbishop wrote angrily to the bishop that he could not allow the friars to be thus maltreated; that for the blows and violence offered them recompense must be made. At the same time he laid it down as a general rule, that the bodies of the dead should be carried to the cathedral church, and a mass said for the repose of their souls; and then, if the friars can show that the corpse has been bequeathed to them, they shall have it for burial, "provided always that the church (of the abbey) loses nothing." Such was to be the rule for the future; but in this case, because of the violence of the monks, the body of De la Poche was to be exhumed and handed over to the friars for burial, and the prior and monks were to be cited to appear before the archbishop. Upon receiving this missive the bishop held an inquiry, and found that the latest wish of the defunct citizen was to be buried in the cemetery of St. Mary (the cathedral); and that no violence had, in fact, been offered to the friars other than the pressure of the crowd around them. The archbishop, however, insisted on the body being exhumed and given up. The friars promised that they would carry it away as quietly as possible; the monks yielded. But, lo and behold! instead of a quiet deportation the treacherous friars invited all the people as to a spectacle, and with "great pomp and much noise, boasting to all the people in English of the privilege thus given to them, to our utter confusion and shame, they carried the body with triumphant hymns and much rejoicing to their cemetery."[1]

The Franciscans, or Grey Friars, by a series of sturdy lying had brought people in general to believe that there was no way of passing out of the world so satisfactory, and so certain to lead to good results, as dying in the habit of St. Francis. Of the monks they had but a poor opinion, and could hold out but little hope of any who were weak enough to put on the black habit of a Benedictine instead of the brown frock of the Franciscan. Thus in the Lanercost Chronicle, which is the composition of Franciscan Friars, and is full of amusing stories of their miracles, we have an account of the dreadful apparition after death of one "clothed in the dress of a black monk," who reduces everything to ashes which he touches, and against whom darts and arrows are of no avail. It is not to be supposed, however, that the attacks were all on one side. If we turn to the pages of the Benedictine Matthew Paris, we shall find the most vehement declamations against the iniquities of the friars. In fact, between monks and friars there was always a very

[1] "Ann. de Wigorn." p. 504.

pretty quarrel, as also between both and the secular parochial clergy. It was partly this latter feeling, and not altogether the consciousness of having abuses in their houses which might bring down censure upon them, which made the monks so extremely dislike and so constantly resist the visitations of the bishops. The bishop, indeed, had often been a monk, but in his episcopal character he stood in a new relation to the monastery; the monkish character had been swallowed up and ceased to exist, and the bishop came as the representative of an external and secular power. An amusing anecdote is preserved by William de Dene, the Rochester chronicler, of a visitation sermon before the bishop when he came to visit the Rochester monastery. The monk took for his text the words in which Jesse orders David to visit his brethren. "Yes," he said, "brethren, not subjects. Those of this house are the bishop's brethren. If he had not been one of them he could not have been bishop;" adding, rather profanely, "The bishop can't say, 'You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,' inasmuch as it was we who made him." "And so," says the chronicler, "he filled his whole sermon with scornful words of the bishop. And indeed not without reason for it, for the brethren had agreed before to give him a bottle of wine if he would say all these things."[1]

Should the bishop come down sharply upon the monastery with a severe injunction, the monks had an almost certain remedy by an appeal to the Pope. It was always the policy of the Papal See to take the part of the regular as against the secular clergy, and the rights of the diocesan bishop were never highly appraised at Rome. Thus, in the long and fierce struggle between the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, against the archbishop backed by the King, the monks, with Rome to support them, proved too strong for the national authorities. Archbishop Baldwin did not hesitate to resort to the severest measures to reduce the monastery to obedience. The monks were kept in a state of imprisonment for eighty-four weeks; but such was the popularity of the shrine of St. Thomas, that pilgrims from all parts flocked to it, and by their gifts kept the imprisoned monks in comfort and luxury. They were so well fed that 200 strangers were daily fed with the superfluous contributions. Fish, vegetables, and cakes were supplied to them without stint, and even poultry was presented for the use of the sick.

The Popes granted arbitrarily exemptions to special monasteries, so that in addition to the privileged orders which were never subjected to bishops, as the Cistercians and the military

[1] "Ang. Sacra," i. 372.

orders, there were here and there among the old Benedictine monasteries houses over which the diocesan had no power. The first abbey which obtained this anomalous privilege was that of St. Alban's, and it came to it through some very strange circumstances. A youth, named Nicholas Breakspear, had sought admission into the abbey as a monk; but he was found, upon trial, to be so grossly illiterate, that the abbot refused to admit him. Upon this the said Nicholas betook himself to Paris, and giving himself earnestly to study, rose, through various promotions, until he became Pope, by the title of Adrian IV. During his Popedom, the Abbot of St. Alban's, believing himself to be oppressed by his ordinary, the Bishop of Lincoln, appealed to the Papal See, but with some misgivings, as he thought the Pope might possibly not feel very kindly towards St. Alban's. On the contrary, however, the Pope considered that the abbot had done him a great service by making him feel his ignorance and apply himself to study. In gratitude for this salutary rebuff, his Holiness granted to the abbey some most exceptional privileges, exempted it from episcopal control, and made the abbot himself a bishop, in all save consecration, constituting him thus the first of the mitred abbots of England. St. Alban's was thus left to govern itself. What it became under this freedom we have unfortunately very melancholy evidence. In the fifteenth century Archbishop Morton addressed a rescript to this abbey, in which the charges brought against it for open and unblushing immorality are so terrible, that had they been written by a Reformer, or by one who was opposed to monastic institutions, we should have simply dismissed them as infamous slanders. Coming as they do from a thoroughly Papal prelate, we are compelled to believe them. Truly, nothing worse was ever written in the Black Book which was got up by Henry VIII.'s commissioners as a preliminary to the suppression of monasteries, than is to be found in the letter of the archbishop, touching one of the most conspicuous abbeys of England. That the case of St. Alban's was, however, exceptional, we are quite disposed to believe. Even the commissioners of Henry VIII. acknowledged that in the great abbeys "religion was well kept." Nothing, probably, could have been more orderly, more dignified and grand, than Glastonbury under Abbot Whiting—Glastonbury, the oldest and the noblest of the English abbeys, the origin of which dates back to British times, which gave no less than seven primates to the English Church before the Conquest. There is no sadder chapter in monastic history than the infamous trial and judicial murder of Abbot Whiting, in order that the vast wealth of this ancient abbey might enrich the profligate spoiler.

That monasteries had ceased long before the time of their suppression, to be, in the general opinion of Churchmen, of any practical value, is shown by the fact that for 150 years before the Reformation scarcely one had been founded. The benefactions of the faithful in the fifteenth century were directed towards colleges. Monasteries had done a good work in their day; but they had become obsolete, and the requirements of the advancing growth of the nation made their abolition necessary. They held about one-fifth of the land of the country, and caused the exemption of all this from State burdens, thus throwing an unfair weight upon the holders of the rest. They took up and isolated from the active service of the country a large number of active and vigorous men and women, which was an impediment to progress; and by their vows of chastity they interfered with the natural growth of the population. Putting aside the religious question altogether, it is evident that monasteries were doomed.

G. G. PERRY.

Reviews.

The Golden Chersonese, and the Way Thither. By ISABELLA L. BIRD (MRS. BISHOP), author of "The Hawaiian Archipelago," "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains," etc. With map and illustrations. Pp. 380. John Murray, 1883.

MISS BIRD'S "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan" was reviewed in THE CHURCHMAN at the time of its publication, and it was recommended as interesting and informing in a high degree. The volume before us—the last instalment of her travels in the Far East—is a companion of that charming work; and those of our readers who desire to put up a first-rate book of travels for a Swiss, Scotch, Norwegian, or American run this summer, cannot do better than purchase this. The accomplished author has several gifts which are really rare; and her works, all of which have been warmly commended in these pages, well repay reading. Certain passages in "The Golden Chersonese" have just now a special interest, describing as they do "unbeaten tracks" in colonies, important from a commerce which is growing, and attractive withal, yet about which few English people know anything, and the general reader nothing. But the whole book, from beginning to end, is ably written, bright, instructive, and eminently real; free from a touch of either sensationalism or flippancy—its tone, indeed, is thoroughly reverent.

The *Aurea Chersonesus* of Ptolemy, the "Golden Chersonese" of Milton, the Malay Peninsula of our day, has no legitimate claim to an ancient history. The first definite statement about it seems to be in a letter from Emanuel, King of Portugal, to the Pope; and he states that