

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Longings.

There is a something—yet I scarce know what—
A something that my longing soul would gain;
A present peace, a future blissful lot,
A happier state, exempt from woe and pain;
Some bright elysium, some deathless spot,
Where peace and happiness forever reign.
O, who will point me to this haven blest?
For thither would I haste "and be at rest."

O! I am weary of this mortal strife,
Though few the years yet numbered on my head,
Still have I tasted of the sweets of life,
And felt the ensuing bitterness and dread!
Why should I linger in a world so rife
With misery and woe?—better the dead!
Yet who the secrets of the grave can tell?
Is Peace found there? Where doth this angel
dwell?

My yearning soul oft strives to break the bands
That bind her to this earthly, mortal clay;
Alone, unguided, would she seek those lands,
Which her fond hope hath pictured "endless
day."

Yet still she falters, and yet trembling stands,
While her uncertain eye doth hopeless stray;
Back on itself her puzzle'd vision flies,
For yet she knows not where elysium lies.

Is there no hand to point me out the place?
Is there no tongue to tell me of the shore
Where I may end this weary mortal race,
And sink to rest when fitful life is o'er?
Where shall I find the path? how shall I trace
The way that leads to peace for evermore?
My spirit folds her wings—an answer's given—
A hand points upward, and a voice says, "Heaven!"

History and Topography.

For the Christian Messenger.

Recollections of Rome.

[No. 4.]

ROMAN GOVERNMENT.

THE theory of the government of the papal states is very beautiful. At its head is the Pope, the representative of Christ, selected to this situation for his intelligence, learning, and piety. As the head of the church he is infallible, and it may be supposed that as the head of the state he would also be in possession of some of this infallibility. The Cardinals from whom he is chosen, are a somewhat numerous body of men, supposed to be eminent in the knowledge of Christian truth, and in the possession of Christian graces. The college of Cardinals, when full, numbers seventy members. The people, though divided socially in classes, are yet, in the eye of the law, on an equality. After the ecclesiastics there are supposed to be no privileged bodies, no powerful and ambitious nobles to oppress the people and thwart the wishes of a gracious and eminently pious ruler.

Every inhabitant of Rome is supposed to be a Christian, a member of the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. If he were not disposed to religion, the law suggests his duties, and calls him to a humble and penitent confession of his sins, at least once a year.

In theory we have shewn a most beautiful government. No proud and oppressive aristocracy, no turbulent democracy, no unscrupulous despotism, but a religious people dwelling under the wise and benevolent rule of the viceregent of Christ. Unhappily this theory does not seem to be so beautiful in its practical working.

A pope does not make so good a king as we might be inclined to imagine. The process through which a man must pass to reach the papacy does not fit him to sway the destinies of men, or to reign in their hearts. His training has not been such as to link him, by human sympathies and affections, to the masses, or, by family, to connect him with the future of his country.

When a little, playful, merry boy, he was selected by his parent for the church, henceforth to be a stranger to the sports and pursuits of the child, the emotions and aspirations of the youth, the interests and affections of the man. He is taught to regard as unholy the tender sentiments, and the warm affections of his soul. He must burn and sear his heart until its natural

throbbings have ceased, until only a scar remains of an emotional nature which might have led him to be a sharer in the cream of human bliss, connected him with all the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of man, and through his own children have made the interests of all future times his own.

But the heart, though seared in its most sensitive parts, yet stirs and throbs, and from its inmost being sends out into life the sterner and more insatiable passions. By a natural law of our being the heart that would have been contented with the enjoyments, and the toils of domestic life, now, when these are denied, turns its cravings to meats and drinks, or gold and silver, or to the means of satisfying its pride and ambition. No man can have opened before him brighter prospects, as regards these things, than the priest. He may yet be bishop or archbishop, or cardinal, or pope. His education has not cut off all the natural propensities of men, it has only dwarfed some of them, to make the remainder more monstrous.

The priest mounts the ladder which stands before him. He swings the censer before the altar,—he raises his voice in the sacristy; he rolls, clad in scarlet, in his gault and purple coach, and becomes familiar with the dignified title of Monsignor,—and finally he sits upon the papal throne, his wildest hopes, for the present, gratified. There he sits a king, but without the education, or the dignity, or the chastened ambition, or the interests, or the sympathies, or the hopes of a king.

This being, with a mutilated and deformed heart, surrounded by creatures as mutilated and deformed as himself, is called to preside over the destinies of three millions of fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, whose affections he never has known, whose hopes he never has shared, and whose dearest interests he cannot comprehend.

But this is not all. He is, while king of the papal states, supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church. Both offices he must fill, and his duties must often be of a very incongruous character. Now he hears mass, and then regulates the duties on tobacco; now turns from the solemn services of the Sistine chapel to give directions respecting the lotteries which he patronizes; now he sends a missionary to New Zealand and then sends the police after some political offender. Then again the interests of the two kingdoms may clash; the time demanded by the spiritual state may encroach on the attention due to the temporal; political events may arise to cause the sacrifice of the interests of either church or state. The church must be protected at all hazards. No encroachment can be permitted on the privileges of the priest and cardinal. The home of the Roman must remain under control of men who know no home. A gulf as deep as that which separated Dives from Lazarus, must remain between laymen and ecclesiastics. The infallibility of the pope is not a good quality in the Roman king. Fallibility is a great virtue in a monarch; he can suit himself to the characteristics of his people and his age. He is not committed to uphold all the faults and follies of his predecessors. The infallibility of the pope, though this excellence regards primarily his spiritual kingdom, yet must also affect him as a temporal sovereign. It necessarily blinds him to the change in disposition and habits which have taken place in his people, and renders him deaf to those claims for reforms which this age has made necessary.

The cardinals who select the ruler for Rome, and form his council, are not pre-eminently fitted for either office. They are men of different ages, tastes, education, and aims. In the past, popes have been elected, some, because they were extremely old, and probably soon to open the way for a new election; others, because they could bribe even the congregations of cardinals; and others, again, because some potentate of Europe had found a way to the wills of the pious electors. Hence the cardinals are not just the men to select the best ruler for the papal states.

Then, as his advisors, they are not remarkably well adapted to promote, by their counsels, the welfare of the Roman people. Their interests are mainly those of the church to which they belong; the state is a secondary consideration. Some of them have been brought into the congregation easily and rapidly, through princely influence; others have forced their way by toil or intrigue. But however they may differ in taste, and education, all seem equally unfitness to be the advisors of a temporal sovereign. They have no homes, no sympathy with the purest enjoyments of the people, no interest in its future progress. Some of these cardinals, like Antonelli, are the very incarnations of pride, and haughtiness,—others look like supple, wily men of the world; and others, again, are only fat. None of these qualities are essential to the welfare of the Roman people.

Now let us trace some of the effects of this peculiar government. The priests are very numerous. Each order of monks and nuns in Europe is represented here by a monastery or nunnery. The monks may be seen at any hour of the day, with sandaled feet and bare head, robed in coarse brown cloth, and carrying on their shoulders a wallet nearly stocked with cold victuals which they have begged. The priests are much more dignified. They, for the most part, appear somewhat fat, with a very long coat reaching nearly to the heels, with their heads surmounted by a very low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat. They seem to look with some contempt on their brethren of the monastery. In short, by their supercilious looks and very long garments, they remind one very strikingly of those Puseyite clergymen whom we sometimes meet with in this Protestant land. In Rome there are about 50 cardinals, 30 bishops, 120 prelates, 1700 priests, 2500 monks, 1800 nuns, and 500 students. Such a population would scarcely be tolerated even in Naples.

The press is kept under close surveillance. The only journals in Rome are edited by priests, who suppress or modify at pleasure the little news they choose to give their readers. The newspaper, about the size of a sheet of foolscap, containing an elegant panegyric on absolutism, a denunciation of liberty of every description, a notice of some benevolent offering to the church, and some half dozen advertisements. Every book, whether printed in the city or imported, must undergo a severe examination. All works displeasing in any way to the censors, are placed upon the index expurgatoris. In consequence, every book worth reading is recorded in this index. Then with these regulations, there is an enormous postage on letters, hence we conclude, that whether the works of the papal government be evil or not, it certainly hates the light.

While the people have no voice in their government they are heavily taxed, and since ordinary taxation will not supply the necessities of their rulers, queer schemes are devised to make up deficiencies. A large portion of the revenue is derived from lotteries. The lottery offices are nearly as numerous in Rome as whiskey shops in Glasgow. This mode of gambling so fascinating for the poor and draining so heavily their resources, is not only permitted but encouraged by the vicar of Christ. Lotteries have been prohibited in America, England, Germany, and, we believe, even in France, except for religious purposes, but in Rome they receive the sanction of the head of the church.

The laws, such as they are, are understood to be wretchedly administered. It is generally believed that justice favors the man who can make the most judicious use of his money; and so far as the custom and passport system is concerned, corruption is so prevalent, that the traveller feels quite lost when, leaving the Roman states, he comes to countries where he is not invited to bribe.

The natural results of this government have been witnessed. A city with nearly 200,000 inhabitants without a rail road, or any of the stimulants to industry and enterprise which we see every where else,—a people

impoverished with the incessant drain on it by its rulers to keep up an expensive court, a government constantly on the verge of bankruptcy, living from hand to mouth, letting the morrow take care of itself—streets swarming with beggars, priests and soldiers, and prisons crowded with criminals or with men who do not believe that it is impious to think of deliverance from the tyranny of their ruler though he be Pope of Rome.

The Roman people are dissatisfied with their government. They have longed for liberty, and learned how to defend it. Though their struggle in 1849 was a vain one, yet Roman patriotism knows how to exhibit a spirit of self sacrifice, and the soldiers of the young republic did not hesitate to meet in the shock of battle the veterans of France.

How then we ask can the people be kept in subjection to this incompetent and unpopular rule? This brings us to notice an effect of past misgovernment and the cause of the present subjection. You see the French soldier every where, in the museums, wandering over the ancient ruins, sitting in the cafes, drinking in the wine shops, strutting about like the cock whose image he bears in front of his shako. A false republic, soon to lose even the shadows of its liberties, sent an army of Frenchmen to besiege the ancient city, to suppress the war spirit, to replace on the throne the benevolent but weak minded man, who had shown how incapable he or any pope was, of governing the temporal affairs of a modern state.

English Baptist Missionary Society.

[The following summary of the extensive operations and present gratifying results of the English Baptist Missionary Society, will, we doubt not, be read with pleasure and deep interest by all who pray "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—Ed.]

BRIEF NOTES OF MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

THE Society has Agents in India, Africa, the West Indies, and France.

INDIA.

In India the missionaries of the Society labour in Bengal, in the North-west provinces, and in the Presidency of Bombay.

The population of Bengal, not including Orissa and Assam, is nearly thirty-nine millions; of the North-west provinces, twenty-three millions; of Bombay seven millions.

Seventy-eight missionaries of all denominations labour in Bengal; forty-nine in the North-west, and thirty-seven in Bombay; that is, one missionary to about four hundred and fifty thousand people.

This is a less proportion than would be one minister of Christ in Liverpool, Manchester, or Glasgow.

But in Bengal there are upwards of nineteen millions and a quarter of people, among whom no Missionary is found; the case is the same among more than twelve millions and a quarter in the North-west provinces, and to the like extent in Bombay.

In Bengal, the Baptist Missionary Society has forty-six stations in twelve districts, among eleven millions and a quarter of people. At these stations are employed twenty-five missionaries, and seventy-two native preachers.

Thirty-eight churches of Christ have been formed, having about eleven hundred Hindoo members, besides four hundred Europeans and East Indians.

In connexion with the stations are nearly four thousand other persons who have renounced idolatry: there are thirty-three boys' schools, with upwards of sixteen hundred boys in attendance; and nine girls' schools, with one hundred and thirty children.

In the North-west, the Baptist Missionary Society has six stations, in four districts, among three millions and a quarter of people.

At these stations there are nine missionaries, and eighteen native preachers. Four native churches have been formed, containing eighty members, and in connexion with them there are three hundred persons who have renounced idolatry; nine boys' schools,