

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES,
Vol. I. No. 47.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES
Vol. XX. No. 47.

Poetry.

"It is all Sunshine."

ONE OF THE LAST SAYINGS OF A DYING CHRISTIAN:
Life's storms are all over, and death hovers nigh,
The last conflict approaches—the Christian must die,
But calmness and light are at eventide given,
In death he enjoys a faint foretaste of heaven.

No doubt to disturb, no fears to oppress,
His spirit has felt the last pang of distress;
A heaven-blessed peace encircles his brow,
He, smiling, exclaims, "It is all sunshine now!"

No shadows of death his spirit dismay,
He looks upward with joy to the mansions of day;
While the smile of his Saviour bids sadness depart,
And the sunshine of glory illumines his heart.

This cloud is dispersed by the sun's cheering ray,
And fair promise we have of a glorious day—
That more glorious far, and transcendently bright,
To him is the sunshine of heavenly light.

If such the fair prospect, oh! what must it be
To inhabit those mansions of blest purity?
To exchange a world of darkness and night
For the sunshine of heaven and regions of light?

The heavenly Sun shall go down no more,
Unclouded its beams on that peaceful shore;
Oh blessed exchange! to us he is given
The dawns of earth for the sun light of heaven!

MARY.

History and Topography.

For the Christian Messenger.

Recollections of Rome.

[No. 1.]

Rome is the most interesting city in the world. Jerusalem has associations of the most sacred and thrilling interest connected with her, but Jerusalem is now only to be visited for her associations. Athens has, surrounding her, scenes which recall glorious recollections of antiquity, and from the Acropolis one can contemplate a panorama of matchless beauty, but the glory of Athens is all in the past. Paris has objects of art of peerless worth—she is a city of palaces; but the associations connected with her are of comparatively little interest. Rome, however, is interesting in every point of view. Her history reaches back far into antiquity, and embraces names that we mention still with admiration or veneration. A thousand objects still survive to connect us with some of the most interesting events in our civilization and religion. The beautiful in nature and in art are here assembled in matchless profusion to give additional interest to a city so interesting from its historical associations, and its venerable remains. Rome, moreover, is the seat of a religion which, of all others, can best excite the imagination by its mode of worship, and excite wonder by its success in retaining the human mind in its grasp, unmoved and undaunted by all the intellectual power of the nineteenth century. Rome, with her associations, her monuments, her works of art, her position, her religion, her government, and her citizens, can attract to her gates the scholar, the artist and the christian, and offer to them all, more attractions than any other city in the world.

Rome, though fallen, still excites a great and, on many accounts, a wonderful influence. She is still in reality the metropolis of Italy, the royal city of the Roman Catholic world. Though there are six or seven capitals of so many independent Italian States, yet, during the last revolution, when men hoped for an united Italy, all eyes were turned to the Seven Hills. The city of the Caesars is no more. The city of the popes is without commerce or manufactures, yet there was a magic spell in her name. She uttered the simple word "liberty" and the sound flies from city to city, from state to state. "Bomba" fled from Naples, and Florence was without her tyrant and Austria trembled for Lombardy.

But Rome exerts a vast influence, not merely from her glorious name, but also by her relation to the Papal system of religion. The pope is not loved by his subjects. A few years since he left his palace on the

Quercinal in the disguise of a menial and sojourned in Gaeta. The pope is not venerated by his people, for he dare not appear in public without an armed escort. He would not fancy going to a great exhibition in Rome, if one can imagine such a thing, like the British Queen, trusting to the love of his subjects. The pope is not feared by his people, for if the French army of occupation were to withdraw, he would be obliged to pay another visit to the dominions of his cherished son "Bomba" of Naples. Yet after all, this pope can exert a great influence in the world. He is at the head of a religious system which has a terrible history, and is still mighty. Though often opposed and sometimes severely injured, it still survives with hundreds of millions of adherents. From Rome it stretches forth its monstrous arms. It can keep patriotic Italy dispirited, and not only annihilate the influence of democratic Switzerland, but call down the brave Swiss from their free mountain homes to guard the den of the hyena, Bomba. It can cause Austria to cringe and carry its sandals, and make even free-souled Hungary despair. It can root out the liberal thoughts and hope of Germany and make the world shout with derision at the very mention of French liberty. It can creep into the proudest universities of Protestant England; steal the hearts of hundreds of her clergy, and make men ask wonderingly whether the church of England be Protestant or Papal. It can push its huge claws across the Atlantic, and move powerfully the free states of America. No wonder that despots look eagerly to Rome, and no wonder that freemen, the world over, turn shudderingly away.

We lift up the veil however, and peep into the past, and find that the Rome of the present is only a relic, a broken column of what was once a gorgeous temple. A few centuries ago the city of the popes was more noble, and her power exerted towards grander aims than now. A few centuries since, and Raphael produced his Transfiguration, and Michael Angelo erected the Dome of St. Peter's. Then there were true artists, real statesmen, enthusiastic scholars. Then, Rome with all her errors was the friend and pattern of art and literature.

Her power also while dreadful, forces admiration, and emotions akin to the sublime. I see the whole world barbarous, distributed among rude monarchs, and brutal lords. The mighty possess power unlimited, the feeble are without protection. The cruel spirit of paganism is still rife in the breasts of the heathen nations. What power can civilize these semi-barbarous peoples? In Rome I see a priest with shaven crown, and scarlet gown, without armies or treasures, lording it over these lords and kings, as despotically as the Caesars over their vassal monarchs. He can send hordes of his spiritual subjects to die in Palestine, or scatter fire and sword over the fairest portions of France and Spain. He can prescribe to the nations what they may think, and exercise absolute dominion over the world's conscience. The Pope of Rome was once a nobler beast than now. Once he was the tiger preying on wild beasts worthy of his might, now he is only the hyena feasting on dead carcasses, or content with trying his power on rabbits and lambs. Once he dictated laws to Europe, now he retires vanquished from Piedmont. Once he caused millions to be massacred, now he is satisfied if occasionally an old man, in a jail can be punished for heresy.

But we can look back to a Rome more mighty than the papal. Once all these seven hills were tenanted, and what are now but broken fragments, were glittering palaces—gorgeous temples, stately basilicas, and magnificent arches.

"Thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an Imperial city stood,
With Towers and Temples proudly elevate,
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches and Theatres, Baths, Aqueducts,
Statues and Trophies, and Triumphal Arcs,
Gardens and Groves."

Here are stupendous relics coming down to us from the days of the Roman kings, almost rivalling the pyramids of Egypt to

prove to the boasters of modern times that mechanical skill as great as theirs existed before their civilization was born. Here, too, are gigantic structures in honour of the great names which Roman history mentions.

There was a time when the sound "I am a Roman citizen" ensured protection all over the world; and there was a time when no fortress was so mighty and no corner so obscure, as to provide deliverance for him who had offended the majesty of Rome. She was then the mistress of the world. Behold

"Legions and cohorts, turners of horse and wings
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian, turn from farthest south,
Syene, or where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotic Isle, and more to west,
The realm of Bacchus to the Black-moor sea;
From the Asian kings and Parthians among these,
From India and the golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian Island Taprobane,
Dark faces with white silken turbans wreath'd,
From Galla, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Samothracians north
Beyond Danubian's to the Tauric pool,
All nations now to Rome obedience pay.

But beyond the interest created by the remembrances of stupendous power, there is the reflection that the might of Rome prepared the way for the rapid spread of Christianity. Every enemy which she conquered, every road which she made, gave the heralds of the cross the opportunity and the means of proclaiming the glad tidings. But for Roman roads and Roman power, ages might have elapsed before the knowledge of Christ could have spread beyond the bounds of Asia Minor.

From all these circumstances we visit Rome as we would no other city in the world. Here cluster the most interesting and soul-stirring associations; here are the most precious treasures of the past, and here the triumphs of art and intellect.

Marriage elevates Character.

People may think as they please, but the truth is, that till one becomes the head of a family and a father, he can scarcely be called a man. Exceptions there are, honourable, conspicuous. Instances may be pointed out, though far from common, it is believed, where one not advanced to the dignity supposed, and so not subjected to its numerous trials and victories—defeats too sometimes, it must be confessed—have yet had as liberal and expanded, as any who have assumed conjugal and parental responsibilities. Nevertheless, in general, those helps are needed to direct what there is unselfish, serious, generous, and sympathizing in the soul. Men, and women too, grow hard by living for themselves alone. With little or nothing exterior to disturb their emotional natures, their affections are apt to settle quietly around themselves as a centre, and finally crystallize there. Such a person may be a miracle of virtue and propriety, beautiful even in its transparent purity, but after all as hard as the diamond, if not as cold.

One needs the claims upon him as husband and father, to take him out of himself and awaken his solitudes and cares for others. The wear and tear he is subjected to from these relations, do him good. They are wholesome exercise for the heart, as labour is for the muscles. We may not tell exactly why it is so, but of the existence of the fact there is striking evidence in the experience of the mother, who loves that child best which has given her most anxiety and trouble. For whom is all the tenderness of the father lavished? Is it not upon his wayward boy, his prodigal son? The parent is chastened and made better by having wife and children dependant on him for pleasure, comfort, and support. The little vexations—sometimes great ones, perhaps—which they occasion, do him no harm, but the contrary. His own character is matured while he is laboring and suffering to shape that of others. He who does not suffer, cannot know half there is in man.

Not only is the heart of a man made better by assuming the obligations of a husband and a father, but his mind is also greatly improved. A new horizon opens

to him. Before, he was travelling through the world in a valley; he now ascends to higher ground, and for the first time sees mankind as they are, and begins to comprehend society, its origin, its work, and destiny. He now awakens to the glorious call of duty, instead of pleasure, to which he only listened before. Not that pleasure is denied him now, but it comes of itself in the train of duty discharged, instead of being solicited, as formerly, for its own sake. This revolution, produced by his change of position, is marked upon his countenance, where it is no less visible than in his changed conduct. *The man* is stamped upon it in very serious, thoughtful lineament, where cheerfulness and sedateness have taken the place of meaningless gaiety, frivolity, and want of sober aim. If any one says he is acquainted with very many single persons of large and sympathetic hearts, and minds full of liberal thoughts. It is granted. Place that man, so admirably endowed by nature, at the head of a family, for which he was doubtless intended, and he would be twice a man, and his usefulness increased fourfold.—*Newark Sentinel.*

Not to be envied, after all.

A while ago we fell in with a person, whose condition would probably be regarded by most people as peculiarly enviable; and yet we had not a whit of any such feeling toward him. He held a public office in one of our large cities—a quiet and cozy situation for a government official—and said he, "I have no wish for the least possible change in my circumstances. I have a pleasant family—they are all that heart could wish; they are all in perfect health, and pleasantly situated; my own health is equally perfect; my income is ample; all my surroundings are agreeable; and the best wish I could utter to the Almighty himself is, that he would let me live forever just as I am!"

Think of that. Here was a man so well to do in the world that by his own showing, he had not one aspiration beyond it; so well satisfied with his share of the comforts and pleasure of this narrow earth, and this present life, that he had not a wish for anything higher and purer and better; and we may add, as indeed would necessarily follow, he had no good hope of anything better. The world would call him a happy man; in a certain sense he was so. Few, very few, could say as much as he did, concerning their worldly condition and circumstances. And yet, from our heart of hearts we pitied him. We were sorry for his very happiness; for we could not help thinking what the word of God says of "men of the world, who have their portion in this life;" we could not help thinking of such a declaration as "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them;" we could not help thinking of the Saviour's story of the rich man and the beggar that was laid at his gate; and as we thought of all this, we say again, as we said at the time, we were sorry, for the very happiness of our comfortable and contented worldly friend. We were sadly afraid of the probable issue.

For, after all, as he himself understood, his wish could not be granted. Whatever elements of satisfaction this world can afford, *continuance* is not one of them. Satisfying though it may seem for the present, it is *only* for the present. "The fashion of the world passeth away," and the prayer for an abiding portion here, is one that God will never answer. Well will it be for the prospered man of the world, if he shall seasonably experience enough of earth's changes and disappointments, to lead him to seek successfully, "a better and an enduring substance."—*Christian Secretary.*

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.—Christ by his death slew for us our infernal foes; by it he abolished death; by death he destroyed him that had the power of death; by death he took away the sting of death; by death he made death a pleasant sleep to the saints, and the grave for a while an easy house and home for the body.—*Bunyan.*

The world is more apt to reward appearances than deserts.