

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. I. No. 40.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1856.

WHOLE SERIES
Vol. XX. No. 40.

Poetry.

The Chamber of Death.

If thou, O man! of death art found in dread,
Come to this chamber, sit beside this bed.
See how the name of Christ, breathed o'er the
heart,
Makes the soul smile at death's uplifted dart.

The air to sense is close, that fills the room,
But angel forms are waving through the gloom;
The feeble pulse leaps up, as 't would expire,
But Christ still watches the refiner's fire.

Life comes and goes,—the spirit lingers on;
'Tis over! No! the conflict's not quite done;
For Christ will work, till of life's sinful stain
No spot nor wrinkle on the soul remain.

He views his image now! The victory's won!
The last dark shadow from his child is drawn.
The veil is rent away. Eternal grace!
The soul beholds its Saviour face to face!

Is this death's seal? Th' impression, O how fair!
Look, what a radiant smile is playing there!
That was the soul's farewell: the sacred dust
Awaits the Resurrection of the Just.

Call not the mourners, when the christian dies,
While angels shout him welcome to the skies.
Mourn rather for the living dead on earth,
Who nothing care for his Celestial Birth.

Death to the bedside came, his prey to hold,—
All he could touch was but the earthly mould:—
This to its native ashes men convey:—
The freed soul rises to eternal day.

Religious.

POPERY IN SPAIN.

[From the Bulwark.]

DEAR SIR,—As I believe it would interest your readers to know something of the practical working of Popery in Most Catholic Spain, I transmit you copies and translations of papers which I have lately received.—No. 1 is a handbill sold publicly in the streets, it is indifferently printed on coarse paper and adorned (?) with a rude woodcut of an image of the Virgin, yclept "Our Lady of Remedies," and underneath are the following words in Spanish:—

"THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN OF REMEDIES."

"A new and curious paper in which is narrated and declared the great plague of fire and stones, which fell in the present year on the 30th day of July, in Carchalejo in the province of Granada.

"On the said day, about half-past eleven in the morning, there arose a black, horrible, and frightful cloud, which terrified everybody, with darkness like night, scattering lightning and thunder, darting forth bolts, fire, and stones, which exceeded ten and eleven ounces each; and suddenly there arose a powerful hurricane destroying the vines and all sorts of trees, and after a short time there came an immense clap of thunder which buried a street and a half of the town and various other houses, the great number of beings who were killed was 114. The next morning some masons who were at work found in a corner of a staircase a girl fifteen years of age, her person being without the slightest injury, because she carried about her this divine print; at the same time two travellers were coming towards the said town, when they took refuge at the foot of an oak; one did not fear the wrath of God, when there fell a bolt and reduced him to a cinder, the other was entirely uninjured because he carried with him this holy relic. All classes of persons, as well children as men and women, who carry this print with them, will be free from thunder-bolts and lightning, from tempests and earthquakes, from heart-affections, gout and other diseases; into whatever house the divine print may be, no evil thing can enter. Various bishops have granted many indulgences to every Christian who recites a Salve with devotion before the image of the Virgin of Remedies, and carries with him her portrait.

The second is a sort of play-bill of a "drama" acted in the "Circus of Paul, a new theatre."

"After a brilliant symphony, will be executed the Biblical drama of a grand spectacle in four tableaux, whose title is—

"THE PASSION."

"Each act and each tableau has its especial title.

Act. 1. Conversion of the Samaritan Woman.
" 2. Repentance of Mary Magdalen.
" 3. Entry into Jerusalem.
" 4. Treason of Judas.
" 5. The parting of Jesus and His Mother.

Tableau 1. The Supper.—The Capture.

" 2. From Herod to Pilate.
" 3. The Crucifixion.
" 4. The Descent from the Cross.

Act. 1. The Resurrection.

" 2. The Ascension.

Here follow the characters—

Persons.	Actors.
JESUS CHRIST,	Senor Chavarria.
THE VIRGIN,	Senora Ceune.
THE MAGDALEN,	" Garcia.
MARY MAGDALEN,	" Arderius.
THE VERONICA,	" Navarro.
&c.,	&c.

One's heart grows sick while contemplating the low depths to which a noble nation may be brought when under the withering influence of Popery. The following letter is from an eye-witness, and descriptive of the whole affair:

"The Circus of Paul is a mere 'Salon de Spectacle' rather than theatre, as this term is usually understood, of an oblong square shape, the seats below being all on the same level, and having a gallery on one side, and another at the end fronting the stage. The latter is somewhat elevated, of confined dimensions, and preceded by the customary orchestra and footlights. During the season of Lent, 1856, it had been taken by a company who proposed to give a series of representations of the passion of our Lord, in imitation of those given at Barcelona from time immemorial, and in competition with another company who simultaneously opened a similar series at the 'Theatre of the Princess.' The performances of both had been warmly praised in the periodicals of the capital, and, on perusing these accounts, I was induced, from a natural curiosity, not altogether unmixed with misgiving, to be present at the representation announced for 7th February. I had been given to understand this would principally consist of a performance of sacred music, and a number of tableaux vivants studied from the paintings of the old masters, and only began to be undecieved on reading the programme, which gives a tolerable notion of the succession of the scenes, variety of personages, &c., &c.; but nothing short of actually witnessing it could convey a correct impression of the startling impiety of the whole representation. One feels an almost insurmountable repugnance to give even a description, which must necessarily involve the free use of names which we at least are accustomed never to mention without veneration. The representation of the holiest personage was assumed by an individual whose personal qualifications were the reverse of those we would have expected to find,—in short, a beetle-browed ruffian, with a coarse, false, black beard, dressed in a dark purple gown, and whose histrionic abilities were limited to a certain forlorn but villainous expression of countenance, and whose gesture was indescribably stiff, and ungracefully affected,—in fact a caricature which, in common with others, haunted me for long after. The part of the Virgin was taken by a female whose only merit seemed to be a facility for weeping and wailing, which drew down the sympathy of the weaker part of the audience; the other ladies, one of whom indulged us with a song, were anything but well-favored, and as actresses far below mediocrity. Judas, according to the generally believed tradition in Spain, wore a yellow garment and was provided with a preposterous curly red wig and beard; his voice, too, was artificially harsh. I need not mention more particularly the rest. The costumes whose splendor is so pompously

announced, were very commonplace. I especially remember the tawdry finery and false pearls cast away by the Magdalen in the scene of her repentance; the ill-adapted bald crown of St. Peter; the forlorn, ill-fitting, heterogeneous trapping of the awkward Jews and Romans; the angels' paste-board wings, and the hideous disguise of the imps who danced a demoniac jig, amid a blaze of real fire, round the hanging body of Judas, in the scene of his despair. The scenery, too, was very inferior, although not so considered by some, at least, of the audience whose admiration was audibly expressed at view of the Judgment Hall of Pontius Pilate; the tableau of the Crucifixion was a clumsy copy of Reuben's great picture. The literary portion of the drama consisted of doggerel verse embodying not only the scriptural accounts but most of the apocryphal traditions added thereto in the dark ages of superstition, the whole accompanied by a vulgar exaggeration of sentiment, which to me on any other subject would have had quite a grotesque effect.

"It is utterly impossible to describe the sickening feeling of disgust inspired by the whole representation, I should say which ought to have been inspired, but, alas! and here I come to the most important circumstance,—what were the feelings actually awakened in the majority of the audience? I grieve to say, incredible as it may appear, that the greater number seemed to accept the whole as a true interpretation of the gospel history, (which indeed it had been given out to be;) others came to be amused just as they would have attended any other dramatic performance. In an instance which occurred close to where I was sitting, the entertainment of two ladies and a gentleman consisted in the amusement and laughter to which they were excited by the sympathetic ejaculations and tears of a couple of elderly ladies who sat near them. But what religion is this which inculcates no higher notion of sacred things, and draws no line of distinction between the true and false, what elevates and what debases; whose members in their taste and feelings become so depraved as to permit them to witness impious mockeries like this without horror at the blasphemy involved. . . ."

If Spaniards were allowed to read the wonderful works of God in the inspired narrative, in the tongue in which they were born, they by comparing these dramas (and others acted in various places by priests themselves) with the Word of truth, and finding they did not agree, might even dare to believe the latter rather than the former. How many a Christian mourns over that benighted country, beautiful in all its external features, with large capabilities of soil, position, mineral treasures, &c.; whose people were once respected and even feared by the nations, but whose name is now a by-word and a reproach; whose energies are all but destroyed by that gross system which, if allowed to operate upon any country, first cripples and then annihilates every good feeling and all honourable and Christian emotions? Who hears in our day anything of the living literature of Spain? where are her navies that once commanded the seas, her statesmen, philosophers, warriors? Has rot Rome and her idolatry dried up the well-springs of thought and enterprise, by denying the liberty which makes all men free, and taking away the tree of knowledge which makes all men wise? As a set-off to this glimpse of Romish practice it is gratifying to know that earnest, strenuous efforts are being made for completing a plan which will guarantee the diffusion of the Word of the Living God throughout Spain. Who will not bear upon their hearts in prayer, before Almighty God, the case of Spain and all other countries under the galling yoke of Babylon.

RESTITUTION.—Better it is to go begging to heaven, than to go to hell laden with the spoils of rapine and injustice. Remember that the same day in which Ziccheus made restitution to all whom he had injured, the same day Christ himself pronounced that salvation was come to his house.

Quarries for Solomon's Temple.

A recent traveller seems to have discovered the origin of the stones in Solomon's temple, a problem whose solution has long perplexed the most learned antiquarians. The *London Athenaeum* has the following article, made up from the notes of Mr. Douglas, a Scotch traveller.

"During a visit to Jerusalem, in the spring of 1855, I became acquainted with a very intelligent Hebrew, who informed me that there were extensive quarries beneath the city, and that there was no doubt evidence that from these quarries the stones employed in the building and rebuilding of the temple were obtained. He told me that these excavations were accessible through a small opening under the north wall of the city, that he had descended some time before with two English gentlemen, and had spent with them several hours in exploring the excavations, which were sufficiently extensive to have furnished stones enough, not only for the construction of this temple, but for the whole of Jerusalem, the walls included. He expressed his readiness to accompany me, but proposed to go after dark, as he feared the Turkish guards might fire upon or maltreat us, if they detected us. As my party comprised two ladies, and my two sons, all equally desirous with myself to see these excavations—as the gates of the city were closed at sunset, and as there were no houses outside the walls—I would not listen to the proposal to spend the night in the open air, unless, upon trial, I found we could do no better. We accordingly went to examine the situation and size of the opening. We found it about one hundred and fifty yards to the east of the Damascus gate. It seemed like the burrow of some wild animal. There was no rubbish above the opening, but some tall grass and weeds. Persons entering might be observed by the guards; but this did not seem very likely, as the soldiers generally remained within the gate, and only very rarely one sauntered outside. We accordingly decided to make the attempt by daylight, fully satisfied that, even if observed, we should be only rudely driven away.

The next morning, therefore, we left the city as soon as the gates were opened. One of the party got into the hole, but returned, saying that it would be necessary to get in feet foremost, as there was a perpendicular descent of six or seven feet at the inner opening. He went back again with the lights; I followed. The ladies were got through with considerable difficulty. When fairly inside, we found ourselves in an immense vault, and standing upon the top of a pile which was very evidently formed by the accumulation of the minute particles from the final dressings of the blocks of stone. On descending this pile, we entered through a large arch into another vault, equally vast and separated from the first by enormous pillars. This vault or quarry led by a gradual descent into another, and another, each separated from the other by massive stone partitions, which had been left to give additional strength to the vaulted roofs. In some of the quarries, the blocks of stone which had been quarried out lay partly dressed; in some the blocks were still attached to the rock; in some the workmen had just commenced chiselling; and in some the architect's line was distinct on the smooth face of the wall of the quarry. The mode in which the blocks were got out was similar to that used by the ancient Egyptians, as seen in the sand-stone quarries at Hagar Tilsis, and in the granite quarries at Syene. The architect first drew the outline of the blocks on the face of the quarry, the workmen then chiselled them out in their whole thickness, separating them entirely from each other, and leaving them attached by their backs only to the wall. They were then detached by cutting out a solid passage behind them, which while it separated the blocks, left them roughly dressed, and left the wall prepared for further operations. We remarked the similarity between the stones chiselled out in these quarries and the few blocks of stone built into the south-east corner of the wall of Jerusalem, which are so remarkable for their size, their