

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS : FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 1859.

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Poetry.

The Crocus.

Beneath the sunny autumn sky,
With gold leaves drooping round,
We sought, my little friend and I,
The consecrated ground
Where calm beneath the holy cross,
O'ershadowed by sweet skies,
Sleeps tranquilly that youthful form,
Those blue unclouded eyes.

Around the soft green swelling mound
We scooped the earth away,
And buried deep the crocus bulbs
Against a coming day.
"These roots are dry, and brown, and sere,
Why plant them here?" he said,
"To leave them all the winter long
So desolate and dead."

"Dear child, within each sere dead form
There sleeps a living flower,
And angel-like it shall arise
In Spring's returning hour."
Ah, deeper down—cold, dark, and chill,
We buried our heart's flower,
But angel-like shall he arise
In Spring's immortal hour.

In blue and yellow from its grave
Springs up the crocus fair,
And God shall raise those bright blue eyes,
Those sunny waves of hair,
Not for a fading Summer's morn,
Not for a fleeting hour,
But for an endless age of bliss,
Shall rise our heart's best flower.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Religions.

Persecution in Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

The following letter to the London *Freeman* will show that persecution is no less unrelenting when called Protestant than when under the form of Romanism:—

MY DEAR SIRS,—Will you kindly make space in your journal for the accompanying communications from Brother Wegner? They give painful evidence of the continued hostility of the Mecklenburg Government to religious liberty.

The frequent repetition of statements to this effect are not less grievous to us than they may be wearisome to some of your readers, yet, sympathy with our suffering friends constrains us, by giving publicity to the wrongs put upon them, to stir up our English brethren, who have espoused the cause of religious liberty, to put forth efforts for the relief of the sufferers.

All can pray, some can act, for our Mecklenburg friends. May I hope that an appeal for both forms of aid may not be made in vain to your readers, by

Your brother in Christ,
J. G. ONCKEN.

Hamburg, March 4, 1859.

"Ludwigslust, Feb. 16, 1859.

"My Dear Brother,—Our cause so long threatened with destruction, seems now in danger of receiving what is intended to be a final blow. The confiscation of our property has been resumed by the removal of our sacramental utensils and the tracts in our possession. Yesterday at three o'clock p.m., all the members of our church appeared at the judicial court in consequence of a summons received. I was made to appear alone, and a decree published in 1855, permitting us after six months' prohibition to resume our meetings, was read to me. At that time I had to give an exact list of our members, and received a strict command to admit no strangers to our assemblies, nor to make proselytes, on a penalty of an entire suspension of our meetings. However, to-day, when the list of members above referred to was compared with the number of those who had appeared in court, the number was found to be increased by three. I was rigidly questioned as to where these three persons had been instructed in our doctrines, whether they had attended our meetings, where they had been baptized, and finally, how Koch, the dragoon, had become a Baptist. My declarations having been put down, all the

brethren were called in, and the following decree of the police read to us:—As by an act of grace, with the sanction of the highest authorities, you received permission unitedly to perform certain devotional exercises, i.e., without an interference with the prerogatives of the Church, such as the administration of the Lord's Supper and baptism, and without proselytising efforts. You, however, have abused the mercy shown you, in admitting strangers to your assemblies, and converting them to proselytes—(Mr. Wegner, although he did not baptize them, administering the Lord's Supper to them)—your meetings from this date, February 15, 1859, are entirely suspended, and every transgression will be followed by a fine of ten dollars, or in default of payment, severe imprisonment. 'I,' added the lawyer, 'shall have you vigilantly watched, and cause house-searchings to be held, so that you must shape your course accordingly.' Hereupon we were dismissed, and returned to our dwellings cast down. What is now to be done? How many petitions I have already addressed to the Ministry, some, it is true, with partial success, but now my courage fails me."

"February 22nd.

"Yesterday, the wives of brethren Duwel and Wendt (who are soldiers), and Koch, the dragoon, were summoned to the military court. Our sisters were informed of the suspension of our meetings, and that were they found to take part in conventicles that might nevertheless be held, a fortnight's imprisonment would be the consequence. After our sisters had given testimony of their faith they were dismissed. In brother Koch's case a court-martial was held to decide as to the punishment to be awarded him for insubordination to his superiors. The charge brought against Koch was the transgression of the three following commands:—

"1. Not to distribute tracts among his comrades in the barracks.

"2. Neither on Sunday nor during the week, to take part in our religious services.

"3. To avoid my house and intercourse with me.

"On account of disobedience on these points, brother Koch has been sentenced to six weeks, upon which he entered yesterday. He is confined in the chief police prison. The treatment is as follows:—The delinquent is kept for forty-eight hours upon bread and water in a dark dungeon, where there is neither straw-bed nor chair, in short, nothing but the bare floor. On every third day he receives warm food, is taken into a light room, and has a sleeping-rug given him; but at the expiration of the twenty-four hours he is led back to the dungeon. These changes will be continued during the six weeks, so that if brother Koch survives it will be a miracle. It is, unhappily, not in our power to render him any assistance. We can only pray for him, and this I hope you, and all to whom the account of these sufferings become known, will do.

"F. WEGNER,

"Pastor at Ludwigslust,
"Mecklenburg-Schwerin."

Protestantism in danger in France.

"A *Projet de loi*," says *The Patriot*, "which has hitherto escaped the notice of the vigilant correspondents of the English press, though it will most materially abridge religious liberty here, has, we are credibly informed, received the sanction of the *Conseil d'etat*, and unless prompt measures are taken by way of protest and remonstrance, will assuredly presently become actual law. Though the measure is almost all that the worst enemies of Protestantism in France could desire—and we might pretty certainly assert its Jesuit origin—yet there are not wanting plausible excuses for its concoction. Our readers are aware that, in many of the rural districts and small towns of the provinces, the *Prefets* and *Maires* have, at the instigation of the Roman Catholic priests, shut up some Protestant places of worship, interposed

obstacles to the opening of others, and in various ways harassed and annoyed the members of the Reformed communions. All these matters are ultimately carried, on appeal, before the *Conseil d'etat*, who therefore now says that no new Protestant place of worship, whether belonging to the Protestant National Church, or much more if to Dissenters, shall be opened except by a direct authorisation granted by themselves. This may, perhaps, mean that they will get rid of all the trouble occasioned by the interference of the petty district authorities. But though this part of the measure may thus be palliated, what shall we say for its remaining provisions, which decree, first, that no foreigner shall be permitted to preach in France, and, secondly, that no church in France shall receive foreign aid! Under cover here of gratifying national vanity, a most deadly blow is here aimed at the Protestant societies in France, who are well known to receive continual and most important aid from England, without which they could not possibly continue their evangelizing labours. How it is intended to prevent such pecuniary aid being rendered them we cannot conceive. The law against foreigners occupying French pulpits is not intended to be retrospective, so that it will not interfere with the eminent foreigners already labouring, with great success, in many parts of France. We are not without hope that this atrocious attempt on the few remaining liberties of Frenchmen will be crushed in the egg. The Protestant National Church is, of course, greatly aggrieved by the project; for, whereas it is at present recognised as a National Church, and therefore in all respects upon an equality with the Roman Catholic Establishment, this bill, by requiring the Protestants to obtain an authorisation for the opening of new places of worship, which the Roman Catholics do not need, places them at a most serious disadvantage. They are, therefore, making the most strenuous efforts to prevent its adoption. The Protestant Dissenting communities are seeking help from British Christians, and we hope that high influence will be used to avert, on their behalf, the threatened stroke. If all is unavailing, and the law is passed, religious liberty will exist in France only in name."

Lamartine on the Psalms of David.

The last psalm ends with a chorus to the praise of God, in which the poet calls on all people, all instruments of sacred music, all the elephants, and all the stars to join. Sublime finale of that opera of sixty years sung by the shepherd, the hero, the king, and the old man! In this closing psalm we see the almost inarticulate enthusiasm of the lyric poet; so rapidly do the words press to his lips, floating upwards towards God their source, like the smoke of a great fire of the soul wafted by the tempest! Here we see David, or rather the human heart itself with all its God-given notes of grief, joys, tears, and adoration—poetry sanctified to its highest expression; a vase of perfume broken on the step of the temple, and shedding abroad its odours from the heart of David to the heart of all humanity! Hebrew, Christian, or even Mohammedan, every religion, every complaint, every prayer has taken from this vase, shed on the heights of Jerusalem; wherewith to give forth their accents. The little shepherd has become the master of the sacred choir of the Universe. There is not a worship on earth which prays not with his words, or sings not with his voice. A chord of his harp is to be found in all choirs, resounding everywhere and for ever in unison with the echoes of Horeb and Engaddi! David is the psalmist of eternity—what a power hath poetry when inspired by God! As for myself, when my spirit is excited, or devotional, or sad, and seeks for an echo to its enthusiasm, its devotion, or its melancholy, I do not open Pindar or Horace, or Hafiz, those purely Academic poets; neither do I find within myself murmurings to express my emotion. I open the Book of Psalms, and there I find words which seem to issue from the

soul of the ages, and which penetrate even to the heart of all generations. Happy the bard who has thus become the eternal hymn, the personified prayer and complaint of all humanity! If we look back to that remote age when such songs resound over the world; if we consider that, while the lyric poetry of all the most cultivated nations only sang of wine, love, blood, and the victories of coursers at the games of Elis, we are seized with profound astonishment at the mystic accents of the shepherd-prophet, who speaks to God the Creator as one friend to another, who understands and praises his great works, admires his justice, implores his mercy, and becomes, as it were, an anticipative echo of the evangelic poetry, speaking the soft words of Christ before his coming. Prophet or not, as he may be considered by Christian or sceptic, none can deny in the poet-king an inspiration granted to no other man. Read Greek or Latin poetry after a psalm, and see how pale it looks!—*Lamartine's Cours de Litterature*.

The Value of a Scrap of Paper.

"Don't waste that paper," said a boy to his sister; "it makes me think of poor Judge Edwards in India."

"What of him?" asked his sister.

Judge Edwards was an Englishman, who for months lived only by hair-breadth escapes, dodging the rebels at one place and another, until he made his way to Calcutta. He wished one time to send a note to his wife, who was in some place of safety. A native took pity on him, and promised at the risk of his life to carry it.

"I wanted to write two," said Mr. Edwards, "but had only a small scrap of paper, half the fly-leaf of Bridges on the one hundred and seventeenth Psalm. Pen or ink I had none, and only the stump of a lead pencil, of which only an atom of the lead was left. I began to write, when the lead fell out. I was in despair. But after a great deal of searching in the dust of a mud-floor, I found it, put it back, and wrote two notes about an inch square, which was all the man could hide about his person, for the rebels had already killed several men for having English letters found on them. When the notes were ready I got a little milk and steeped them in it, to make the writing indelible, and then put them out to dry on a wall in the sun. In an instant a crow pounced on one and carried it off; it was that for my wife. I of course thought it was gone forever, and felt almost broken-hearted, for I had no more paper and no hopes or means of getting more. Singh, a faithful native, had, unknown to me, seen the crow, followed, and after a long chase of an hour, saw the bird drop it, and picking it up, brought it to me unhurt."

"I wonder if she ever received the letter," said the boy's sister, who always liked to know how things came out. "Yes," answered the boy, "and the man fetched him an answer back. When the messenger saw Mrs. Edwards, she was dressed in black, for I suppose she thought her husband had been murdered by the horrid Sepoys; but after she got the letter she went away and put on a white dress."

RIDING A HOBBY.—The Archbishop of Dublin tells of a horseman, who, having lost his way, made a complete circle; when the first round was finished, seeing the marks of horse's hoofs, and never dreaming that they were those of his own beast, he rejoiced, and said, "This, at least, shows me that I am in some track!" When the second circuit was finished, the signs of travel were doubled, and he said, "Now, surely, I am in a beaten way;" and with the conclusion of every round, the marks increased, till he was certain that he must be in some frequented thoroughfare, and approaching a populous town; but all the while he was riding after his horse's tail, and deceived by the track of his own error. So it is with men that ride a hobby.

Sebastopol, reduced from a population of 40,000 to 6,000, is still a scene of ruin and desolation. Most of the people live in wooden sheds left by the British and French.