

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SUCCESSFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A Lock of Fayette Irene's Hair.

All else of her in death has faded  
Except this little lock of hair,  
Which once her noble forehead shaded,  
And clustered in bright ringlets there.

Its kindred locks are lying too  
Cold, cold within the silent grave;  
And this is all that's left us now,  
'Tis all of her that we could save.

From off her marble brow we sheared it,  
When death had placed his signet there;  
And sacred do we hold this relic,  
This lock of Fayette Irene's hair.

This little golden shining tress  
Still bids a thousand memories start;  
'Tis all that's left of loveliness,  
And I will bind it to my heart.

'Tis a memento of the past  
That brings to mind her lovely form,  
Too sweet, too beautiful to last,  
Too fair to suffer wind and storm.

And though no more we see her face  
Amid our little circle move,  
'Tis pleasing still to have a trace  
Of one who shared our ardent love.

The little golden shining tress  
That graceful waved upon her brow,  
Is like a halcyon's halo bright  
To cheer our saddened spirits now.

It is a precious treasured thing,  
I keep it with a jealous care,  
And naught can e'er such feelings bring  
As Fayette Irene's silken hair.

G. M.

## Religious.

### Protestantism in Italy.

We noticed last week that Italy at the present time presents some features of a highly interesting character. We find an article on this subject in a late number of the *London Freeman*, which we have slightly condensed, and believe will be read with pleasure by all friends of genuine Protestantism:—

In the bosom of modern Italy, as elsewhere on the Continent, dark possibilities slumber. The thoughtful observer of the phase through which the people of that country are now passing, has no hesitation in pronouncing with distinct and fearful emphasis, that, unless all history be a delusion and a lie, "the end is not yet!" Political and religious despots, in the contemptible ways in which the necessities of modern Europe compel them to exercise their power, may now seem to grin satisfaction over the temporary triumphs which they have achieved, but inwardly they are stung with the painful sense of fast-vanishing power. "We are glad to see you in Rome, General," said one of the cardinals to the officer in command of the French troops, "for if you were to go to-day, we must be off to-morrow." "Pardon me," said the polite Frenchman, "but if you will allow me to offer a word of advice, it will be to take care to go the day before us." A significant look and shrug ended the interview. To outside observers, who are not infatuated with the possession of power, the tremendous issues with which the present state of things is pregnant, is, if possible, still more obvious.

The present pause is one of slowly gathering energy. It is terrible in its very calm. The instincts of crowned and mitred selfishness are just wise enough to take alarm at the forces which are kept for a time, and for a time only, in abeyance. The causes of those volcanic heavings which have again and again unsettled thrones, and threatened to arrange afresh the map of Continental Europe, are not only still in action, but with increasing, though quiet, virulence. Throughout the Italian States, with the exception of Sardinia, which is felt to be as yet but an experiment, the ultimate success of which depends upon many contingencies, political material enough is

being gradually but fully accumulated, to be ignited into a fire and maddened flame. But even in Sardinia, where the political constitution is so much less infected with the deadly virus of Catholicism, the feeling—now being common to all Italy—that wherever the latter exists in any considerable portion, full liberty cannot be long possible, exists in a similar intensity. To know how thoroughly the Church of Rome is hated where she is best known; what utter loathing and contempt she can engender where she shows the fullest way; what bitter scorn and execration she can call forth from the growing mass of her unbelieving children, is necessary to mix freely with the Italian themselves.

Among the forces now at work in Italy, the joint action of each will, assembled, ere long, "shake tery the earth," there is one element to which public attention has not been sufficiently directed,—that is, the Protestant. In what way the presence of this element either promote or modify the coming edict, it is not for us to say; but that it *here*, and that it is growing, is a fact of such interest and importance, that it will, we think, afford service, to give some brief account of it to our readers.

The historic Church of the Vaudois is already well-known in the Protestant world. For ages they have copied "the Valley," seeking refuge from the various persecutions to which they are exposed. Now they are recognised by the Government of Sardinia, and are allowed to carry on their worship in comparative freedom. But it is important to notice at the isolation of this church from the alien people—their language, organization, modes of thought and of feeling, being French—is such that they are regarded as foreigners. And beyond Sardinia, they are said to be powerless. But there are other communities of Protestant Christians who are thoroughly Italian, and whose origin must be traced to the commotions of 18, when the Scriptures, in a manner which history will probably have little to say, got into circulation among the people. In spite of the restrictions which papal authorities are trained so skillfully to impose, "the Word" stronger than craft and force, and aided by any official agency, continued to spread and to produce usual results. In the year 1851, several hundred individuals who had become Protestants fled, under persecution, from France to Piedmont, and laid the foundation of the communities we speak of. It is supposed that there are at the present time upwards of 20,000 Italians reading the Scriptures with interest. "Last year about 4,000 copies were disposed of in Genoa, and upwards of 2,000 at Nice, where a depository is kept by Francesco and Maria Madiai, who were banished from Florence in 1851." Those brought under this influence are to be met with, not only in the larger towns and cities, but also in villages and hamlets, in Sardinia, Tuscany, Lombardy, in the Papal States, and in Naples. The little communities formed in consequence meet in the primitive fashion, more or less openly, as they are permitted to; subject even in Sardinia to various annoyances and persecutions, but still hold on their way in a manner worthy of the high spiritual ancestry, by whose exiles they are inspired. "In Sardinia there are fourteen or fifteen evangelists, and in other parts elders or pastors are to be found, though without any formal designation. Among the latter, the most prominent positions are occupied by Signor Mazzarella at Genoa, and Dr. De Sanctis, at Turin. The first was originally an advocate; said to have "considerable talent for public speaking" to be "well skilled in the Scriptures;" to be well able to meet the wants of a large and increasing class of men in whom Romanism produces nothing but disgust and scepticism. The second is reputed to be "a man of sound and extensive acquirements, eminently skilled in the management of the Roman Catholic controversy, and every way qualified to impart superior education to any who may be engaged for services which may require it. These communities consist mainly, as that be expected, of

peasants, day-labourers, mechanics, small shopkeepers, and servants; but as exceptions to this rule may be named Count Guiccardini and five or six others, who, driven from Tuscany, are now labouring in the same great work in Sardinia.

The meetings, as conducted by these Protestant Italians, attest the presence of a new and genuine power. We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of extracting the following, from a recent work on this subject. "At Genoa (April, 1858) we attended a Sunday evening meeting held at eight o'clock. About ninety persons were present, of whom at least eighty were men; for the women, partly from their more retired habits, and still more from the greater influence exercised over them by the priests, are always the last to come to such places. After singing and prayer, twenty of the men present read aloud a portion of St. Matthew's Gospel, verse by verse, and then the evangelist delivered a plain but effective expository discourse on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Mazzarella, at this time, had not returned from Alessandria, where he had been imprisoned. The audience, which consisted of persons from twenty-five to fifty years of age, were remarkably attentive. Several of them were evidently persons of education and intelligence, and above the labouring class in social position; but the mass were poor, and, with the exception of a soldier and two or three seafaring men, the ordinary poor of a large city. . . . At Alessandria we found that the brethren, besides assembling three times on the Lord's day, met every evening for worship or instruction. We happened to be there on a Tuesday, and on expressing a wish to be present at one of their ordinary week-day services, were told that on Sundays the room was crowded, sometimes the townspeople attending in such numbers that it was impossible to obtain standing room; but that on week-nights comparatively few came, the members of the church being almost exclusively labourers, working from five in the morning till seven in the evening, and consequently too weary to attend regularly. Determined to ascertain what we could from personal observation, we found our way to the place of meeting by half-past eight, the time appointed, when a scene presented itself which we shall never forget. Forty-two men and thirty women were there: all in the prime of life, all in the dress which they had worn through the day—worn, toil-worn, rough labourers. There they were, seated on benches, all who could read—and they were many—with an Italian New Testament in hand, which they were regarding with deep and fixed interest. The evangelist, sitting in front, was reading a chapter in St. Matthew's Gospel, explaining as he went on, and at intervals interrupting, but at the same time enlivening, the exercise, by putting questions first to one and then to another, in order to ascertain whether he was understood. The answers were given simply but clearly. This lasted about half an hour. A brief extempore prayer was then offered by one of the poor men present, an utterance marked by deep emotion, and then a hymn was sung, a simple version of those beautiful and well-known lines—

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
O Lamb of God, I come to thee."

After this an expository sermon on the parable of the treasure hid in a field was delivered with great force, fluency, and animation."

Some of the characteristics of these Protestants who are springing up under the awful shadow of the Romish Church are as remarkable as their growing numbers. It is to be observed that the utter primitivism of their mode of worship and of their church constitution, is a matter of deliberate and decided choice; so, on the same principle, is their continued separativeness from the church of the Vaudois. Notwithstanding repeated attempts on the part of the Vaudois to induce the Italians to join them, the latter persist in their isolation. The explanation lies in the simple fact that they are *Italians*. "To the Italian of the nineteenth century—alas! that it should be so—the church, whether Papal or Protestant, is simply *una bottega*

—a shop; religion, in whatever form it may be presented, *negozio*—a craft or trade; ministers, of whatever denomination, *ipocriti*—hypocrites."—Hence, on the time-honoured principle of wishing to be "as unlike Peter as possible," the Italians, it appears, are determined, when they become Protestants, to have as little of the nuisance of a full-blown church as they can. This simplicity extends to all their arrangements. "All the Christians in any given town or city, whether meeting in one place or not, constitute one church. Though poor, their liberality to those among their own body abounds." Their basis of union is *essentially and simply* evangelical.

We cannot conclude without observing that this Italian Protestant Church occupies a peculiar vantage-ground in the Roman Catholic controversy. It appears to us that it can best meet Popery as it is. This, we may venture to hope, is the design of Providence. Let all Protestant Christians be large-minded enough to acknowledge it! Not only so, but when "the day of wrath" comes upon the Catholic nations of Europe, sweeping away with infuriated storm the hoary structures of the past, it will be of infinite importance to them and to the world, if there be, even now, a form of religion rising up so *unlike* that whose doom will be indignantly sealed, that it cannot, by any confusion, be imperilled. Great revolutions are indiscriminate—endanger friend and foe. Not alone do despotisms perish. The simplicity of Protestantism in Italy may, at no distant day, save true religion.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A Sketch from Calvary.

"And sitting down, they watched Him there."

What a subject for contemplation.—Christ, the anointed Messiah, Son of God, heir of heaven, extended on the cross in a position of the most extreme torture. Those hands, that with mournful tenderness had been stretched out over Jerusalem, as he saw the storm gathering, that must burst upon the proud head of the Jew who had refused to bow to so lowly a Messiah, nearly rent in twain by the weight of our sins resting on that glorious form. Those feet, that had trod so patiently the weary way of life for us, torn by those cruel nails. All know how sympathy sweetens the bitter cup of human sorrow, yet He whose heart overflowed with sympathy for the sorrowing, wandered often in solitude, "where no man comforted or cared for Him."

Behold Him in the garden of Gethsemane, bending low on the cold, damp earth, where, as the moonbeams rest on that paled face, they reveal great drops of blood oozing from his brow and cheek and falling on the ground.

Ah, with what a weight of agony were those sacred drops laden. What a wearisome burden must our sins have been, when they so darkly stained even the moisture that gathered on that face.

He was alone in his agony saving the companionship of the Angel, whom the Father in pity that none watched with him, sent strengthening him.—Even that beloved disciple whose head had so recently rested on his Master's bosom, slept while he suffered! And what a life of suffering was his; and shall we complain when the storm blasts gather and the cloud covers, our fairest prospects? Tired wanderer, whose path seems to lead only o'er the rough and the rugged of life, think what thy Saviour, thy Brother, thy friend endured for thee, and trust patiently, trust in Him "who trod before thee the desolate paths of life, and strive to bear in meekness as He meekly bore sorrow and pain and strife." Rest a moment on Calvary's bloody summit, and "watch him there."—Mark the expression of agony patiently endured, that lingers around those pale lips. The lines that mental and physical suffering has drawn on that colourless cheek. Catch the glance of mournful compassion with which his eye follows those proud Romans who pass and re-pass the cross wagging their heads in cold cruel scorn, and keenest invention of cruelty,—the crown of thorns upon that head divine.