

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Scatter seed.

In the furrows of thy life,
Scatter seed!
Small may be thy spirit-field,
But a goodly crop 'twill yield—
Sow the kindly word and deed—
Scatter seed!

Sun and shower aid thee now,
Scatter seed!
Who can tell where grain may grow?
Winds are blowing to and fro;
Daily good thy simple creed—
Scatter seed!

Up! the morning flies away—
Scatter seed!
Hand of thine most reverent,
Heart must keep pure desire—
While thy brothers faint and bleed,
Scatter seed!

Though thy work should seem to fail,
Scatter seed!
Some may fall on stony ground,
Flower and blade are often found
In the clefts we little heed,
Scatter seed!

Spring-time always dawns for thee,
Scatter seed!
Ope thy spirit's golden store,
Stretch thy furrows more and more,
God will give to thee thy need,
Scatter seed!

Religious.

Protestant Missions at the forthcoming Great Exhibition at Paris.

The Great International Exhibition at Paris is to have a new ecclesiastical feature, which is likely to create some interest in reference to the missionary operations of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches respectively. The Rev. W. Arthur at one of the meetings of the Wesleyan Conference at Leeds, gave the following account of this matter:

He said: All are aware that next spring it is intended by the French Government to hold in Paris a Universal Exhibition, inviting the products of all nations, and it is confidently anticipated that there will be such an assemblage of the nations of Europe and America as has never been, on the continent of Europe at least, before. The Champ de Mars is to be devoted to this great object, and very extensive constructions are growing up, and with the prospect before them the Roman missionaries applied for leave to exhibit such things as would illustrate their missionary undertakings throughout the world. It was at once granted. The French Protestants heard of it, and they applied for leave to exhibit things to illustrate Protestantism. With them it was both a point of honor and an instrument of propagation. Mr. Hocart is behind me, and he knows that one of the stock arguments of a friar's Lenten preaching is this—and very often it comes in the peroration—the Catholic religion shows its glory by the foreign missions; the heretics, the Protestants, have never ventured to send one missionary across the seas. (Laughter.) There are millions of intelligent people on the continent of Europe who devoutly believe it, and that it is one of the Divine evidences of the Roman Church, that it has missions scattered all over the world. Therefore, the Protestants applied for leave to exhibit and prove to the whole continent that there were Protestant missionaries across the seas who were labouring amongst the heathen for the spread of the Gospel. The Emperor accorded the permission at once. (Hear, hear.) It is said that upon this being known the Jesuits at once said, "Well, if the Protestants are allowed to exhibit, we will not," and it was intimated to them that they must. But they insisted that they would not. The report goes on to say that an intimation went forth from the highest authority in Paris to the highest authority in Rome, saying, "They are to exhibit!" So it was settled that the two were to go side by side. But then came the great question, if the French Protestants

were to exhibit for themselves, they could make only a very small demonstration; and whether they would be permitted to call the great societies of Europe and America around them, and ask them to unite in one common display, whereby the eye of the Continent might look at once on all that was being done throughout the world by the various Protestant missionary societies. This also was granted. (Hear, hear.) Then whether they would be permitted to have anyone to represent them upon the commission? Yes, if the various Protestant societies would accept it, one member should be put on the Imperial Commission to represent them. Then, whether they would be permitted to exhibit books—Bibles, tracts, and specimens of languages, and products of anything and everything showing what they were doing. Yes, all that. (Hear, hear.) Still, a further question. Whether they would be permitted to send men to be on the spot to give discourses explaining the objects and the operations? Even that was accorded. (Hear, hear.) Allow me to read to you the conditions as they are finally written. They are these:

I. That all the Protestant missionary societies in Europe and America join together to make one general exhibition. The necessary accommodation shall be granted for that purpose.

II. That the various Protestant missionary societies accept the committee of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society as their representative and delegate. It is agreed to, a number of the said committee shall be admitted among the Commissioners appointed by Government to regulate and superintend everything pertaining to the Exhibition.

III. That the different societies send all they deem calculated to give an idea of the religious, intellectual, and social condition of the nations among whom they labour; native implements, weapons, dress, and produce, both in agriculture and industry, before and since the introduction of Christianity; imitations, on reduced scale, of their pristine and present dwellings; translations of the Bible, books, tracts; journals printed in the stations; works published by missionaries, especially on travels and philology; specimens of the writing of native converts in their respective languages and those of Europe which they have learned; idols and all sorts of curiosities, together with specimens which may throw light on points of natural history.

The Protestants of France, at once undertook to raise a building, and expend £1,200 upon it; and they appealed to the societies of Europe and America to join them in the work. The Church Missionary Society was the first to respond, subscribing £200 towards the building. Mr. Forbes the clergyman from Paris, came direct to our Mission-house—our committee was sitting at the time—and they have resolved to subscribe £200. (Hear, hear.) My impression is, that if we were to do what we ought to do, it cannot be done for less than £500.

Some conversation took place as to the best mode of raising this sum; and it was generally agreed that it would be better to apply to a few wealthy friends. One gentleman then gave £50; and, before the meeting broke up, seven others announced that they would give similar sums and two others subscriptions of £25 each; making £450 in all.

Immoral publications.

The responsibility before his fellow-creatures of a writer of books is of the most actual and real nature. The influence which he exerts upon society abides long after the page upon which his thoughts are impressed has mouldered into dust. The growing intellect of a generation yet unborn may be warped or trained to stand erect as the thoughts of the writer are noble or ignoble. The weak heart may be only made to scoff according as is his teaching; while on the other hand, a book whose author is pure and noble himself, and whose aim is to make others like himself, will be a perpetual teacher of pure and noble things.

In no department of literature is this influence for good or for evil more directly or powerfully exercised than in that of Fiction. Novels and stories appeal to the class which

of all others, is most impressionable. They are written for those to whom works of a studious character are troublesome and without interest—a class which is most easily led into dangerous trains of thought from the unreality of the life which they picture from romances, and by which they surround themselves. When we reflect how vast a proportion of civilized humanity is of this character, and how immense the number of those who read novels alone, as compared with those who take up an occasional history or biography or scientific work, we see at once what a fearful power the novelist holds, and how the manner of his writings may effect great good, or precisely the reverse. At the present time a survey of the field of novel literature makes this reflection rather a painful one. It is true that the novels of today are wonderfully clever, and that they are, many of them, artistic in construction and coloring. But their influence is bad, for they exhibit society under aspects which are attractive to the young, and to the rove of maturer years, but which create false impressions of what the men and women of to-day are, what their standard of honor and virtue is, and how, in short, society compares itself in view of the existence of a Decalogue at all.

The greatest error and mischief of these novels is that they are being apparently written by men and women who alike are enemies of women—with few exceptions, calculated to lower the popular estimate of the female character. There are a number of novels now—novels which are everywhere read with eagerness—the sole object of whose writers appears to be the portrayal of a woman who combines all the worst vices of humanity with all the serpent-beauty of the tempter in Paradise. If the inevitable result of reading such books be traced, it will be found that the reader has been led to consider one-half the female world devils, and the other half idiots. Domestic life in these books is but a sphere of plots and counter-plots, in which a beautiful but wicked woman is the mover, and in which simple-minded men and still more simple-minded women are to be the victims. Another fatal error of these books is the light esteem in which they appear to hold the institution of marriage. Not that, so far as words go, they do not profess largely. They are often enthusiastic in their admiration of virtuous homes and tender couples. But while expressing the aspirations of their heroes and heroines, they paint couples who are not tender, and homes which are not virtuous, as though such were the rule rather than the exception. The marriages in these books are mostly the result of mistaken preferences, and their plot turns upon the hope of freedom to make a new alliance, or an attempt, by downright criminality, to evade the obligations of the old one. And in short, in treating of the social relations of the sexes, and the character of woman, there is raised an atmosphere of impurity and unreasons which is very destructive of moral life.—N. Y. Examiner.

The prospects of Italy.

No country of Europe is surrounded with deeper or more general interest than Italy. Whether we consider its past history, its recent rapid rise, or its present position in relation to surrounding countries, it is full of material for enquiry and examination. The following article on its political position and prospects is from the London Freeman:—

The incorporation of Venetia with the kingdom to which, by geographical position, by language, and by political affinity she naturally belongs, may be regarded now as an accomplished fact. The ill-advised cession of that province by Austria to France is no longer spoken of by any one, and both the Emperors will probably be well content to let their abortive project drop. Austria has practically abandoned her late possessions in Italy, without bequeathing them to any one, and the favourite project of each century solution of all such problems—a popular vote—must now decide the question. But this long desired ending of the Venetian difficulty may possibly only involve the young Italian kingdom in more delicate and serious embarrass-

ments than ever. Her relations with France, which have always been most puzzling to outsiders, will now enter upon fresh complications, whose issue may disappoint the political prescience of the wisest.

The policy of France towards Italy for the last seven years has been more perplexing in appearance than in reality. To a superficial observer it might seem to have been guided alternately by the most inconsistent principles of romantic generosity, nicely calculated worldly wisdom, and downright selfishness. To those who have studied the matter more attentively, the last principle alone appears to be the moving spring of all. It is not the holiest wish of France that Italy should be united free and strong. The rapidly enlarged and prosperous kingdom of Victor Emmanuel is a standing eyesore to every class in the proud and sensitive French empire; to the Emperor, whose personal ambition and hereditary ideas of policy are well known; to the army, in whose old traditions Italy appears only as a conquered province; and to the great mass of the people whose amour propre can ill brook the enjoyment by so near a neighbour of freer laws, and a freer constitution than their own. When Napoleon began the war of 1859 with Austria, he never contemplated the consolidation of a free Italian nation—twenty millions strong—as the result of his enterprise. His motives, it is now well known, were altogether selfish, and his intention, simply to transfer the provinces of Lombardy and Venetia from Austrian to Sardinian rule, taking himself the important Alpine and maritime districts of Savoy and Nice as an equivalent. Had his plan been realized, the new kingdom of North Italy—too weak to oppose his will—would have been a mere appanage and extension of his empire; another province of France in all but the name. When afterwards the course of events threatened to destroy this balance of dependency and power, by adding the Duchies and Tuscany to the crown of Savoy, we all remember how artfully and diligently Napoleon intrigued to hinder this result, and how, when the popular determination was too strong for him, he abruptly terminated the war by the peace of Villafranca; and though his own bargain with Victor Emmanuel was only half fulfilled, extorted the full price for which his armed assistance had been lent.

Again, when the wonderful expedition of Garibaldi in 1860 added the Two Sicilies to the Crown of Italy, Napoleon betrayed the most unworthy jealousy and anger, and exhausted all his diplomatic artifices to prevent the consummation of that union. And he not only defeated the Neapolitan King in Gaeta, but steadily refused to relieve the Romans from the pressure of French occupation, though he knew their ardent desire to complete the national unity which their brethren in the North and South had inaugurated. Therefore to him alone must be attributed the continuance for five long years, of those perilous and irritating sores in the Italian body politic; Austrian army in Venetia; Papal garrisons in Rome; brigandage in Naples, fomented and directed from the Quirinal; and an expensive standing army, which however ruinous to the finances, has been absolutely necessary for the protection of the monarchy.

It is well known that in September, 1864, a treaty for two years was concluded between the courts of Paris and Turin, having for its object the definite evacuation of Rome by the Imperial troops. But the apparently advantageous tenor of that convention for the Italians was more than neutralised by certain conditions on which the selfish genius of the Emperor insisted, some of them still secret, though their nature is pretty generally suspected. The history of the past makes it all but certain that Napoleon will permit no material increase in the territory or the power of Italy, without exacting some equivalent, and it has been openly stated, and has never been denied, that Sardinia and a portion of the seaboard of Liguria are promised as the price of his departure from the Roman states. Whether in the altered circumstances which the recent war has brought about, he will be content to abide by his engagement, or whether he will advance some new claim in virtue of the acquisition of Venetia by his neighbour, remains now to be seen. We confess that we look with some apprehension on the