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PROTESTANT CORNER.

[From the Montreal Witness.]

THE PERSECUTED PORTUGUESE EXILES FROM MADEIRA.

(The attention of Roman Catholics is earnestly requested to the following article, and the respected writer will greatly oblige us by continuing to Correspond with the Witness.—Ed.)

We might, perhaps, reasonably suppose that, could the enemies of true religion foresee the ultimate effect of their opposition to the Gospel, they would cease to afflict those who are seeking its extension. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise God; the remainder of wrath shall be restrained." Seldom, perhaps, has this truth been more signally or quickly confirmed, than in the case of the Portuguese Exiles, who, by persecution, have been driven from their native island, and taken refuge in the United States. They are natives of the beautiful island of Madeira, which, since 1419, has belonged to the kingdom of Portugal. The population of Madeira is about 100,000. Their religion is exclusively popish; and is maintained with great bigotry and rigor. Their spiritual ignorance was, till a few years since, almost incredible. Not only were they destitute of the Bible, "but it was a rare case to find any one who knew there was a book that contained a history of Jesus Christ."

This was their moral condition in 1838, when Dr. Kalley, who then belonged to the Kirk of Scotland, but now to the Free Church, and who is both a clergyman and a physician, went, for the benefit of his wife's health, among them. Having a benevolent disposition, and large property, he determined at once to seek their spiritual illumination. For this purpose, he mingled freely among them—made himself acquainted with their language and true condition—and then established schools for their benefit.

These schools were extended through the island—were sustained by his own liberality—and soon became so popular, that 800 adults, besides children, attended them—and the municipal authorities of Funchal, passed a resolution expressing their thanks for his disinterested benevolence. In addition to these schools, Dr. K. opened a hospital and dispensary, for the gratuitous benefit of the poor; circulated hundreds of Bibles and Testaments; and opened little meetings for the reading and familiar exposition of the Word of God.

These exertions, through the Divine blessing begat, says a Captain of the British Navy, who was an eye-witness of the scenes, "a desire to investigate the life-giving truths of the Gospel: the people began to hunger and thirst after knowledge; their souls were touched with the Spirit of Christ. The seed took root and grew—was watered from on high, and soon became fruitful. To one sinner after another, the Word came home with demonstration and with power. In the course of reading the scriptures they met with many things inconsistent with the religious tenets which they had received from their fathers. Some applied to the priests for a solution of their difficulties, and, becoming gradually accustomed to the exercise of their mental powers, were often dissatisfied with the answers given to their enquiries. The priests were annoyed when they found themselves surpassed, as they frequently were, in the knowledge of the Word of God, by their own Parishioners; and ere long, began to oppose, both the schools and the Scriptures."

The alarm of the priests rapidly extended, and they combined their efforts to stop what was so opposed to their interests. Regarding the schools as the nurseries of the entire evil, their first efforts were directed against those institutions. An order was instantly issued by the Administrator of the Island, and addressed to the Register of each parish, commanding their immediate suppression.—The following is a copy:—

"Sir,—On the receipt of this, you will summon to your presence the teachers, male and female, of all the schools established and supported by Dr. Kalley, existing in your parish and in the presence of two witnesses, charge them, henceforth, not to teach any living being. If, after being duly notified, any of them should continue to teach, you can immediately send them to this administration, in charge of two officers of police. You will cause this order to be faithfully executed; and report the result by Monday next, giving the names of all who have been notified, &c. God save you.

J. C. TENEIRA UZEL, Administrator."

At the same time, the persecution of the converts and the Bible-readers commenced. Many of them were most ruthlessly arrested, and thrown into most loathsome dungeons. The witness before referred to, says, "The houses

of the scholars, chiefly Bible-readers, were broken open: thirty men and women were taken prisoners, most of them bound—many of them were beaten, and some of them very severely—and their houses were given up to be sacked by the soldiers, who committed the most horrible atrocities.—With scarcely any clothes on, (for they had been roused from their beds by the soldiers,) twenty-two of them were conveyed to Funchal, in a Portuguese frigate, which, to complete the melancholy farce, was sent to support the operations of the soldiers; and there committed to prison.—In prison they were denied liberty to read the Word of God; and, though mass had not been performed in it for years, it was now found useful as a means of persecution, and they were driven to mass at the point of the bayonet."

Much, as some of your readers know of the character of Popery, it would, I believe, appal them, were I to detail the barbarities which, at the instigation of Romish priests were committed on those poor unoffending Protestants.—Suffice it to say, that, besides private insults and injuries, which the authorities indirectly encouraged, and instructions from the priests that no one should extend assistance to the converts, or pay them just debts, more than fifty were thrown into prison—among whom was Dr. Kalley, who was confined for five months; and one respectable female, was sentenced to death, because she denied that the consecrated host, or wafer in the hands of the priest, is the real body and the real blood of Jesus Christ, and refused to adore it.

The storm of persecution continued to rage till August, 1846, when it reached its height. Then Dr. Kalley, with great difficulty, effected his escape: not however, without the loss of much property, and a valuable library, worth \$10,000, which the mob destroyed. Many of the converts were obliged to escape to the mountains for safety. This, however, was their extremity, and God showed it was his opportunity; for, just at that time, several vessels visited Madeira, in which 1000 were enabled to leave. Thankful, though with many painful separations, and much sacrifice of property, they bade adieu to their native island. About one hundred landed at Demarara, and about the same number at St. Vincent, and also at St. Kitts; while between six and seven hundred went to Trinidad. Such is the spirit of Popery in the nineteenth century.

Let us now follow these persecuted Christians to Trinidad. They had heard that they might there enjoy liberty of conscience, and freedom to read the Sacred Word, and this made it to them an attractive place. But there new trials awaited them. They soon found that the unhealthiness of the climate, the want of suitable labour, and above all, the mixing of their children "with a low, profane, wretched, Roman Catholic population," made it an unsuitable residence for them.

In 1847, the American Protestant Society heard of their situation, and sent a missionary to visit them. He returned, bringing with him a letter expressing their desire here to find a home. The society forthwith issued an appeal to American Christians, who readily responded in aid of the sufferers. Thus sustained, the Committee encouraged their coming to the United States; and at different periods from the fall of 1848 to August, 1849, four hundred and eighty safely reached our shores.

Their desire was to remain, if possible, together, that they might be in one church, and have the Gospel preached in their own language. This, not only delayed their settlement, but made it more difficult and trying to the Committee. However, their wish was regarded; and after various plans to secure their united and permanent location had (as it now seems Providentially) failed, the inhabitants of Jacksonville, Springfield, and vicinity, Ill., proposed to the Society to employ all who can labour in common arts, or on farms, in their immediate neighborhood. This proposition the Committee gratefully accepted. Just, however, as one hundred and twenty of the refugees were about to leave for their new home, the Cholera broke out, and their friends at the West, requested that their departure from New York might be deferred till autumn. To this the Committee assented, though it threw on them the daily support of near five hundred persons. Happily, they have been liberally sustained; and the refugees have had full opportunity to show their Christian fidelity and gratitude.

Prior to leaving for their new home, it was thought desirable to hold meetings on their behalf, in New York, Brooklyn, and this city. They have all been large, spirited, and effective. Great good to the cause of Protestantism and practical piety has been achieved. Christian sympathy has been increased and strengthened. Living witness to the cruelty of Popery have been seen; and many a fervent and telling appeal respecting its errors and

spirit, has been made. In New York, the Hon. T. Frelinghuysen, said,—"These hunted brethren exhibit in the sufferings the true character of that bigotry and intolerance which will not suffer conscience to be free. They have deserved from us this testimony of our approbation. They are a living rebuke to persecutors. Let us hold up the law of kindness, and try what effect that will have upon the despots of the old world. Let them drive their people to our shores; while they drive we will feed them. If they persecute for conscience' sake, we will give the right hand of fellowship to their victims, for conscience' sake. What a spectacle have we here to night! A whole people driven from their country by persecution. God expects us to sympathize with them, and thus render good for evil to their persecutors. We might return blow for blow on Popery; but O that I could prevail on the whole world to try this Divine remedy. Let us pray for Portugal. I hope some of these young men may yet go back and convey the Gospel to the Portuguese who are still in darkness and tell them what an open Bible and a free conscience have done in this country. The persecutor can meet the resistance of force, but the law of kindness will melt him. If this demonstration of our sympathy cost nothing, it would be worth nothing. They were sent to us to try the cost.—They are cast, not on the charity of the cold world, but on the heart of christian sympathy and love. When the dead of all generations shall assemble—when crowns have passed away in the great conflagration, there will be one living record preserved—"Inasmuch as ye did it to these"—which will outlast all the honours of the world. Let us help them now to get to their home in the West, and if hereafter troubles should press upon them beyond what they are able to bear, we will help them again."

In this city the Rev. E. N. Kirk made an effective speech in which he expressed his belief "that this persecution had been permitted to take place, in order that the world might be more convinced than ever of the true, innate hostility of the Papacy to liberty, religious and political.—These poor people have been sent to our happy shores, in order that our people, many of whom were in danger of losing sight, remote as they are from Rome and from her influences, of the essential, perpetual, and unchangeable nature of that dreadful Apostacy, the enemy of God and man." It is, I believe, even so. And while I rejoice, not in the sufferings of these poor refugees, I bless God that he reigns, that he has enabled them so heroically to witness for his truth, and that the people of this Republic have witnessed their courage and piety, and given to them a happy home.

Boston, November 7, 1849.

D. D.

THE SABBATH.—The New York Sun says, that the Directors of The Hudson River Railroad, just opened, have determined to run no cars in the City on the Sabbath, for the convenience of citizen church-goers, or excursionists. It may cause some murmuring, but it will result in much good. The church-goer and disappointed excursionist should remember that a rail train, or steamer, or a line of stages, run on the Sabbath for his convenience, deprives all who are employed thereby of the enjoyment and observance of the Sabbath. The laborer on the railroad has moral and physical necessities to be considered as well as the pleasure-seeker. We are glad the Hudson River road begins under such auspices, and wish that the spirit dictating them might be imitated far and wide. It may shut the pocket of speculation to a few dollars at first, but in the end it will be to society and the best interest of man a rich gain. In this country, though with less outward ceremony it may be the Sabbath is perhaps better regarded than in any other in the world, and that too, through the voluntary action of the people. As general as is the recognition of Christianity by the American people, so general is the observance of the Sabbath among all ranks and professions. The result is a progressive refinement in all the humanities of our nature, a growth of the moral faculties, and an elevation of the intellectual. So strong and united has the sentiment of society become on this point, that its influence is gradually extending to the extinction of every obstacle to the perfect keeping of the Sabbath.—It has reached the steamboat and the railroad, and silent but penetrating as the light, carried conviction and reform in its path.—Am. paper.

POPERY AS IT IS.—It is sometimes said, that the Romish Church is modified by circumstances, and has now a more tolerant spirit than in former times. But the evidence of such change we have never seen. The Archbishop of Ireland has lately thus expressed his feelings of hatred against Protestantism. "Those feelings were called out by