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Religious Intelligence.

THE MADIAT.

BY AN ITALIAN NOBLEMAN.

I was in London when the prosecution of the Madiat began in Florence. Being myself a victim of political reaction, torn from my paternal home, and having spent four years in exile, I traced all the stages of that prosecution with brotherly interest and solicitude.

Under the force of that sympathy which linked me, a political martyr, with those two religious martyrs, I felt a strong desire to know them better, and promised myself the good fortune of falling in with them in one of those involuntary peregrinations to which a five years' exile has condemned me. Yet I should never have dared to hope that my desires would so quickly, and, as I might say, by chance, have been fulfilled. After the miserable and foolish attempt of last March in Milan, which attempt, by the imprudence of a few, brought down the lash anew upon my country, and on me, who was innocent of all that then took place, and made the burden of misfortune already crushing, fall yet more heavily, I left London to betake myself to a corner of that ancient Province where, after a long and cruel absence, two lovely children were awaiting my return with outstretched arms, and longing to hold me in their dear embraces, while I was panting with anxiety to press them to my heart. My constitution was shattered with five years' tortures, my mind was worn out by long struggling with misfortune, both public and domestic, and with the ingratitude of the world and of individuals, and both mind and body felt the need of seeking relief in those endearments, the only consolation left me by Divine pity, to compensate the troubles I had so long been suffering. But what was my surprise when, on arriving at . . . I found that the Madiat were in that very place, having also come thither in quest of repose, under the shade of orange trees and olives that cover that shore with a perpetual spring! One of the first duties which I then had to perform, was to pay a visit to Sir Culling Eardley, Bart., who had shown himself so kind towards my children, by whom I was introduced to him, and whom I found to be the model of the true gentleman and the true Christian.

I have not words to describe the affectionate welcome which he gave me, but confess that such interviews, rare as they are in the thorny path of exile, bring great comfort to the heart that is wounded by a long adverse fortune. It was by means of the worthy baronet that I entered into communication with the Signori Madiat, with him I found myself in the company of a common friend. At the first sight of him, I scanned the man narrowly with an interest like that of the crowd that comes to gaze upon one that, by some wondrous chance, escapes death by shipwreck, and has just made his way to land.

Signor Madiat is rather tall. His countenance, without presenting those features that are conventionally called noble and strongly marked, has an air of calm and tranquil kindness. His look is gentle, and an expression of inward serenity beams in it. After the first salutations, he related fully,

at my request, the sufferings of his long imprisonment. His relation, given at the moment, with that simplicity which is the eloquence of truth, threw me back three centuries. Although he had suffered much, even in body, the tortures they inflicted on him were moral rather than physical. Excepting only the rack, the red-hot pincers, and the burning pile, he had to suffer all the torture of the ancient Inquisition. Besides the weariness of a long and inquisitorial process, he was tormented by daily assaults, with various weapons, that friars of every sort and every colour made upon his conscience. Some with honied words and promises—some with disdainful brow and threatenings. But, in telling me of the torments he had suffered, he uttered not a single word of resentment, not one sentence to betray the least rancour, or the slightest desire of revenge. After each episode of that dolorous drama, his ejaculation was such as this: "May God forgive my enemies, as, according to his commandments, I have forgiven them with all my heart." But he could not say, as Christ said on the cross, "because they know not what they do." For these furious persecutors too well understand to what result their premeditated persecutions tend.

I afterwards went to visit the Signora Madiat. She is a middle-aged woman of dignified carriage and an open countenance, yet bearing traces of long and painful sufferings that time never will efface. Her manners are noble. The sound of her voice is sweet, and her language is constantly of peace and pardon. When I touched on the story of her recent sufferings, she said to me: "O, Sir, let us not speak of it. God willed it, and let His will be done. The creature cannot fathom the designs of the Creator. I have no more recollection of my suffering than of a distant dream, or if even I do remember it, it is only to pity those who were compelled to persecute me, and whom I have forgiven in the fullest sense of the word and with entire sincerity of heart. I endeavoured to profess the law of Christ, which is altogether a law of love and pardon. By loving and forgiving my fellow-creatures, I no more than follow the precepts of the Gospel, and of that Holy Bible which is my guide in this short, but painful pilgrimage, called life. You, Sir, I know, have suffered much, and still are suffering, but lift up your eyes and your thoughts towards heaven, and there you will see that justice which is denied you here on earth. God does not break His word, like men. His promises are eternal, and they never fail. But if we would advance in the path of perfection, we must begin with forgiving our enemies all the harm that they have done us, and with praying for their conversion."

This first conversation which I now relate to the reader, somewhat refreshed my fainting spirits, raising my hope on the wings of religion. With a second I might perhaps have gone so far as also to forgive my enemies . . . but they have done me so much evil, they have in many ways so sorely wronged my heart, that I do not yet feel myself generous enough to pardon them.

After the rumours which malevolence had circulated, I feared, as I have said, that I should find these Madiat to be two visionaries, two fanatics. On the contrary, I discovered that they were two lambs in meekness, two patterns of evangelical charity. There was only one thought that, in the least, disturbed their peaceful mind, and this was a fear lest any word or deed of theirs, being ill interpreted, should excite in the population any suspicion adverse to their quiet habits and peaceable intentions; hence, in every action, they displayed the highest prudence and constant charity! I left the house, edified by the meekness of the sentiments, and by the prudent demeanor of those two

victims of religious and political intolerance, of which the destiny is a real anomaly, an open contradiction to the nineteenth century, which carries written on its front—civilisation and tolerance.

The Madiat have suffered immensely, for in their prolonged imprisonment they were martyred in body and in mind. By an evangelic virtue, they may forget all memory of such a martyrdom, but never will they escape its consequences. Their shattered health will too certainly survive their generous oblivion, and still render them a walking monument to attest to their contemporaries what are the persecutions of political reaction and priestly vengeance. If the Tuscan Government and priests persecuted in those two persons the propagators of the Bible, the outrage was double; it was both religious and political. The oppressors of the people may regard the Gospel with an evil eye, when it is presented in its original purity, for then it becomes a code of brotherhood and liberty. And what has this religious and political reaction gained by persecuting the Madiat? With the iniquitous sentence that was launched against them, and the renewing in that conjuncture the penalty of death for offences of religion, a penalty that had been wisely abolished by the Leopoldine laws, it has, by a new and extreme example convinced the world that it plays false when, constrained by the force of events, it puts on the mantle of tolerance and clemency, and that as soon as it comes again into the possession of absolute power, it flings away the mask of hypocrisy, and spares no effort to bring back again the age of Philip II. and Torquemada. Miserable folly! They do not consider that the progress of humanity is treasured in the Divine purposes, and that to resist this progress is to fight against God.

But courage! Let faith be the pillar of fire to guide us through the region of darkness that we must traverse, ere we can reach the realm of light. And if, in the inscrutable decrees of God, we should be destined, like Moses, to advance no further than just to the borders of the land of promise, our children will one day enter in with full triumph, and then they will bless the memory of us who, by fighting valiantly, have made for them the rough way smooth.—*London Christian Times.*

CHINESE REBELLION.—A Canton correspondent of the *Watchman* (English paper) writing on the 8th April, makes the following remarks on the religious aspect of the Chinese rebellion:—

"By the Christian portion of the community, the march of events is watched with great interest. It may be that we are about to witness the unfolding of another part of that mysterious scheme by which the providence of God is preparing this people for the gospel of His Son. Whatever be the political issue of this movement we know that 'the Lord reigneth;' and we call upon our brethren at home to unite with us fervent supplication that He will overrule all for the advancement of His kingdom and glory. Religiously—the dark prospect which meets the eye is relieved to some small, but encouraging extent, by the occupation of the empire by about 70 Protestant missionaries, the representatives of 17 different Societies. Of these, America sends more than one-half. In Canton, i. e., in the suburbs, (for entrance within the gates of the city has not yet been gained), there are now 12 missionaries, of whom, with the exception of Dr. Hobson, of the London Missionary Society, and the three appointed by our last Conference, are American. Why not the Christianity of Britain be as numerously represented here as that of America? There is ample room for more. Twelve 'laborers' are indeed 'few' in the midst of a harvest of half-a-million of souls!"