

THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., MAY 2, 1853.

☞ We would call the attention of all our readers to our Prospectus for the NEW SERIES of the "Intelligencer," which will be found on our last page.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

(Continued from the Intelligencer of March 15.)
THEIR PROGRESS.

From the year 1785 and 1786, Sunday Schools were established in a great many districts throughout England, and were found eminently useful wherever they were properly conducted. "The great impediment to their prosperity was the expense of hiring teachers. From 1786 to 1800, the Sunday School Society alone paid upwards of £4,000 to hired teachers. They were generally paid about one shilling and six pence each, every Sunday, for their services." But as Sunday Schools attracted the attention of those true Christians who possessed active benevolence, they offered their gratuitous labours from love to Christ and to the young. This brought them into a flourishing condition, and was the surest pledge of their purity and perpetuity. In the report of the Stockport Sunday School for 1797, it is remarked, "that several who were taken into the School ignorant of letters, are now making the most grateful return by becoming diligent teachers therein; others, grown to years of maturity, are comfortably settled in life, and become useful members in society, whilst some who had been cut off in the bloom of youth, have died in full prospect of a glorious immortality, with their latest breath praying for their benefactors." About 1789, Sunday Schools were introduced into Wales; and so great was their progress there that in three years 177 schools were established, containing 8,040 children. In 1799 the committee of the Sunday School Society determined, "if possible, to print an edition of the New Testament in the Welsh language." And it is undoubtedly a fact, though not generally known, that the want of the scriptures, occasioned by Sunday Schools, led to the formation of THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

In Scotland, which had long been distinguished by its attention to education, it was at first thought that Sunday Schools were not needed, and consequently very few were established till about 1797, at which time they were started in most of the populous places of that country.

The next remarkable era in the history of Sunday Schools, was the establishment of the Sunday School Union, in 1803. The author to whom we are indebted for our information in the history of this enterprise, remarks: "When the public mind became enlightened and sanctified by pious instruction, and the circulation of the scriptures; bigotry, hatred, and discord withdrew like spectres, compelled to retreat at the approach of daylight, and they now only haunt the imaginations of the timid, the unenlightened, or the superstitious." The collision of parties, and the animosities of jarring sects, were unknown in the combined efforts to promote the great cause of Sunday Schools.

The objects of this Union were,—1st. To stimulate and encourage those who were engaged as Sunday School Teachers to greater exertions in the education and religious instruction of the ignorant. 2nd. By mutual communication to improve the methods of tuition. 3rd. To enlarge existing schools, ascertain those situations in London and its vicinity where Sunday Schools are most wanted, and endeavour to establish them. 4th. To supply books and stationary suited for Sunday Schools, at reduced prices. 5th. To correspond with Ministers, and other persons, in the United Kingdom and abroad, relative to Sabbath schools, and to afford them such assistance in the formation of Sabbath Schools and Sabbath School Unions, as the funds would permit. A number of books were immediately published by this Union, and "The Youths' Magazine" was also commenced under the sanction of the committee. This Union combined the energies of the friends of Sabbath Schools. Previous to this the teachers resembled scattered warriors in an enemy's country, but now they commenced a combined and irresistible attack upon ignorance and vice—those worst of enemies to the human race. The disunited efforts of individuals may produce great local benefits, but it is the union of the many by which great and extensive plans must be carried into effect, and a general attack be made on the strong holds of folly and wickedness. When the friends of Christ unite their efforts in the cause of God and humanity—when every Christian feels that he can do something in the great campaign that Sabbath Schools are carrying on against ignorance and vice, then will the Sabbath be kept holy to the Lord—our children will rise up to call the Redeemer blessed; while from the mouths of babes and sucklings, the hills and vallies will re-echo the Saviour's praise.

About 1809 Sabbath Schools were introduced into Ireland. In 1810 only ten schools are noticed in that country, containing 87 scholars; in 1825 there were in one Union 1702 schools, and 150,831 scholars.

We will now refer to a feature in the history of Sabbath Schools, which we believe is not generally known. In 1811, that man of God, whose monument is in THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, and whose memory will be in the earth as long as that institution continues to send forth the Bread of Life—we mean the Rev. Thomas Charles, an Episcopal minister of Bala, conceived the idea of Sabbath Schools for Adults. As a characteristic of Mr. Charles, we give the following extract from one of his letters, dated April 2, 1812:—

"My maxim has been, for many years past, to aim at great things, but if I cannot accomplish great things, to do what I can, and to be thankful for the least success; and still to follow on, without being discouraged at the day of small things, or by unexpected reverses. For many years, I have laid it down as a maxim to guide me, *never to give up a place in despair of success.* If one way does not succeed, new means must be tried; and if I see no increase this year, perhaps I may the next. I almost wish to blot the word *impossible* out of my vocabulary, and to obliterate it out of the minds of my brethren—my fellow labourers. Our enemy is a vanquished foe; resist him and he will flee from you. Surely we may safely rely on the promise of him who is Almighty, and hath promised to be with us always."

In relation to adult Sabbath Schools, he says,—"Observing and bewailing the great number of illiterate grown-up and old people in our poor country, I have in different places published Sunday Schools exclusively for them. * * We have six of these schools for the aged set up within these three or four months; and some hundreds have learnt, and are learning to read. * * Old people of seventy-five years of age have learnt to read in these schools, to their great comfort and joy. As the result of Adult Sunday Schools, we give the following from the Report of an Adult School Society:—

"In Gloucestershire, an old woman, aged 73, and her husband, aged 80, were soon taught to read easy scripture. The husband had been an immoral man and a great boxer, but is now an improved character, and says, the scripture verses afford him great comfort when he lies awake in the night. Dr. Pole mentions a child teaching its grandfather, while sitting upon his knee. The following communication is from Ireland:—In a village where lately the scriptures were unknown, I found a venerable man, nearly 100 years old, sitting on a large stool with the Bible in his hand, and many of his neighbours, who, after their labour, had come to hear him read. Two grandchildren were at his knee, teaching him, and as the poor old man went on reading in a faltering manner, they would occasionally correct him, saying, "Stop, grandfather, that is not the right word, this is the word." Here truly was hoary age receiving instruction of the third generation; and often have children been instrumental in awakening in their parents a concern for salvation. At Glencalvie, in the islands of Scotland, the people flocked in crowds to the schools. An old soldier, who had entered the army in 1715, entered the school as a scholar in 1815.

(To be continued.)

THE MADIAT.

All of our readers may not be acquainted with the facts connected with this case of religious persecution. We propose giving a summary of its principle features.

During the revolution which swept over Europe in 1848, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, (a Roman Catholic government,) was forced to flee his country. During that period a new constitution was formed, under which the Tuscans could enjoy civil and religious liberty; and a large number of BIBLES were put in circulation among them. And many persons, by reading them, were led to see the errors of the church of Rome, in which they had been born and educated. Meetings for reading and explaining the word of God were held in private houses. Young men—Waldenses—from the valleys of the Piedmont, preached the gospel in the Italian language in Florence, and thus the truth made way in the capital of the Grand Duchy.

But at length the reaction came in Tuscany, as well as in other parts of Italy. The Grand Duke was restored—annulled the provisions of the constitution of 1848 and denied the people the rights and privileges which they enjoyed under it. The freedom of the press, and liberty of speech are now denied. Authority to prevent the reading of any book *whatsoever*, has been committed to the hands of four Arch-Bishops and sixteen Bishops of the Romish Church. The result of this has been much persecution for reading the New Testament. Imprisonments and banishments have taken place, and many, for the faith of the gospel have shared in common prisons the lot of felons, or gone into exile.

Early in 1852 FRANCISCO MADIAT, and his wife ROSA, were arrested, and thrown into a loathsome prison, where

they languished several months without even a trial. At length, in June last, they were brought to trial. The charge against them in the indictment, literally translated, was, "impiety, shown in making proselytes to the so called evangelical or pure gospel confession." Their *real* crime was, they possessed and read the Word of God, *they knew its value*, and they desired that others might know the same. After four days trial they were condemned—recent decrees of the government denounce the punishment of death, for the very offence charged upon the MADIAT. Husband and wife were torn assunder, and confined in loathsome prisons. This excited the sympathy as well as the indignation of the Protestant countries of Europe, and a delegation from them, headed by the worthy and christian EARL OF RODEN, a member of the British House of Lords, presented a petition for their release to the Ministers of the Grand Duke, but received no encouragement. This deputation however ascertained (it is said) that there were in Florence about 25,000 persecuted protestants. Prohibited by the tyrant from entering a place of worship, they read the Bible by stealth, and they have been known to meet by twos and threes at a public house, and under cover of their ordinary meal to celebrate the Lord's Supper. It is supposed they have from 10,000 to 16,000 Bibles among them.

But notwithstanding the failure of the Earl of Roden to accomplish the release of these prisoners, the matter was not dropped. It enlisted the sympathies of our protestant Queen—it was introduced in the British Parliament; and on the 18th January last Lord John Russell addressed a letter to Sir Harry Bulwer, the British representative in Florence, in which he declared, that "throughout the civilised world this example of religious persecution will excite abhorrence." And in which Mr. Bulwer was "instructed to speak in the most serious tone to the Minister of Foreign Affairs" in Tuscany on the subject.

The result of this wise agitation now is, THE MADIAT ARE RELEASED. In the British House of Commons on the night of the 18th March, Lord John Russell made the following announcement:—

"The Government has received information that the Grand Duke of Tuscany has liberated the Madiat, (read cheers,) and that they have embarked at Leghorn and left Tuscany."

But all is not yet told—how were they released? "They were not allowed by the Tuscan authorities to communicate with any of their friends, and were sent on board (the steamer) very thinly clad, not being even permitted to take some clothing which was waiting for them at an hotel." They are now in France. A deputation from the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY was to meet them there; and they will probably soon be in England, the asylum for the oppressed of all nations. They have suffered great hardships, and it is feared the husband particularly will not fully recover. "The iron has entered into his soul," and he exhibits symptoms of mental disease. They have borne their sufferings with great patience, and manifest pure christianity.

But while the Madiat have been released there still languished many others in Tuscan prisons, for the same crime—READING GOD'S WORD. Count Guarducci has been sentenced to imprisonment for life; others for a minor term of years.

ELDER JOSEPH NOBLE.

We omitted stating in our last that Brother Noble after a short visit to his family, had returned to Nova-Scotia. He left St. John about the 5th ult., The following letter received from him a few days since, will give knowledge of his labours and prosperity.—[Ed.]

HALL'S HARBOR, Cornwallis, N. S., April 14, 1852.

Dear Brother,—I arrived here in twelve hours after I left St. John. A meeting was appointed for the next evening, and it was a season of refreshing from the presents of the Lord. I found the brethren had been advancing during my absence, and the spirit of revival had increased, and I think I never attended so many good meetings in succession, as I have since my return here. A deep seriousness prevails in all of them. There are many excellent gifts in the church, (both male and female) and they all labour well. During my absence a young sister, Maria Steel died with the consumption. She professed religion last autumn, and was baptized by Elder W. E. Pennington, during his visit here, at that season. She continued while she lived, to give evidence of the truth of her profession, and died happy. She left kind parents, and brothers and sisters, to mourn their loss. Since my return, sister Eliza Porter, eldest daughter of brother Leonard Porter has died. She professed religion in February last, and was one of the eight, that I baptized the sabbath before I left her to visit my family. She was sick only about ten days, but was a great sufferer. In all of it she expressed great happiness in God her Saviour. A few days before her death, she remarked to her mother:—"Three weeks ago last Sunday, I was baptized, and I would not give what I then felt, for