

The Religious Intelligencer.

AN EVANGELICAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER, FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER

An Evangelical Family Newspaper,

FOR NEW BRUNSWICK AND NOVA SCOTIA.

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Please take notice, it is not the Parish or Town

office in which they reside, but the NAME of the

office where they wish to receive their pa-

pers, that we want.

The following letter by the French Corres-

pondent of the "New York Observer," although

lengthy, is a most interesting article on the

present condition of that part of Europe which

threatens at present to disturb the peace of the

world, and will well pay a careful perusal.—Ed.

The Political Excitement in Italy.

THE REAL STATE OF THE CASE.

FRANCE, January, 1859.

The internal condition of Italy grows more

and more difficult and threatening, for here are

twenty millions of human beings paled in an

unnatural and unrighteous position. Not Ma-

zini, nor any other agitator, produces these

disturbances beyond the Alps; it is the

force of circumstances. The evil is too deep to

be cured by diplomatic treaties.

What do the Italians ask? They claim the

right to be an independent nation, and to have

political liberty. The contest is not between

aristocracy and democracy, but between Italy and

foreigners. The question is, whether this un-

happy country shall belong to itself, regulate its

own affairs, and put better governors in the place

of its petty ecclesiastical and lay tyrants. In pro-

portion as the inhabitants of Italy have been

brought in contact with the rest of the civilized

world, they prove how destitute, oppressed and

they are, without influence abroad, almost

without schools at home, deprived, in a word, of

all that constitutes the greatness and prosperity

of a nation. Who can blame them for their

complaints? They ought, doubtless, to

blame themselves first for the degradation and

slavery to which they are reduced. They never

were wise enough to form a close union; their

internal jealousies made them an easy prey to

the arms of conquerors. And then, in the time

of the Reformation, they lacked the courage and

strength to overthrow Popery, which consumes

them like a cancer. These are great faults. But

after all, they have been bitterly stoned for by

the Italians, and a nation which repents the past

and fights for reform, is justly authorized to claim

rights.

It will soon be a thousand years since Otto I. was

crowned King of Italy by the Archbishop of

Salerno, and Emperor of the Romans, by Pope

John XII. During these ten centuries the Ger-

man government has been given to recruit sol-

diers, to the annoyance of the people. The taxes,

already very heavy, have been increased. Mod-

ifications have been introduced into the money sys-

tem, which shake commerce. In short, the

Austrian government, being in want of money,

has adopted changes which have caused general

discontent.

As the inhabitants of Milan have no means of

driving out the Austrians by an armed insurrec-

tion, they have sought how they could show their

antipathy to their oppressors. First, they have

almost all stopped going to the theatres, so as not

to meet the German officers in the same room.

Next, they have avoided going to the coffee houses,

where there are Austrians. Thirdly, they have

forbidden smoking cigars in the streets, be-

cause the sale of tobacco is a source of revenue

to the Austrian emperor. This last prohibition

has occasioned very serious trouble in Milan. A

soldier, who was smoking upon a public place,

was attacked by an Italian. He called his com-

rades to his aid. The citizens, on their part, col-

lected in great numbers. An encounter took

place, and the tumult was not appeased till the

arrival of an Austrian regiment.

At Pavia, the troubles are still more serious.

This city contains a celebrated University, sup-

posed to be founded by Charlemagne, and which

numbers 35 to 40 professors. It has many stu-

dents in it. These young men, full of liberal

feelings, and following the dictates of patriotism

rather than caution, have had frequent quarrels

with the Austrian officers. The police were not

able to restore order. The inhabitants sympathized

with the students. What did the cabinet of

Vienna do? In a moment of passion, it com-

manded the university to be closed, and all the

academical studies to cease. Certainly, the pun-

ishment is draconian! Here, then, is a crowd of

professors and young men, belonging to the best

families in the country, barbarously stopped in

their career! You can judge whether such mea-

sures lessen the dissatisfaction!

Similar scenes are continually taking place in

almost all the cities of the Lombardo-Venetian

kingdom. Austria is seated upon a volcano. She

has increased the number of her troops there

from 15,000 to 20,000 men. The cannons are

loaded. The Austrian soldiers would be the

strongest in case of an insurrection. But can

this violent state of hostility continue long? I

believe not; forbearance has its limits, and mil-

lions of men will not submit forever to be treated

as prisoners of war.

Let us go now to another part of the Peninsula,

the Pontifical States. Here, in a certain

sense at least, the government is not in the hands

of foreigners. The Pope, and the majority of

cardinals, are Italians by birth. They ought to

be, then more agreeable to the population; but

they are not so.

I do not know a period in modern history when

the government of ecclesiastics was preferable to

that of laymen. At all events, that period has

gone by. The cardinals, with the supreme pon-

tificate at their head, as the most incapable and the

most hated governors in Europe, except perhaps

the Turkish government. These Romish priests

do not comprehend the wants of our age. Monks

and beggars swarm; the prisons are crowded, not

only with criminals, but with suspected persons,

and the utterance of a single liberal thought is

enough to cause suspicion. The highways are

beset with robbers, who sometimes penetrate into

the cities, and rob the inhabitants in open day.

The State coffers are emptied for the benefit of

an idle and insatiable clergy. Agriculture, man-

ufactures, the arts, public instruction, all are

neglected and suppressed. Spies of the Holy Of-

fice disturb the peace of families.

Such an abominable government is only pre-

served by the French bayonets at Rome, and

those of the Austrians at Bologna. It is the

universal belief that if these troops should with-

draw, the clerical authority would not last twen-

ty-four hours in the Pontifical States. The

cardinals would be obliged to flee for fear of

being thrown into the Tiber. But is not the oc-

cupation of the country by foreigners a sad ex-

tremity? And is there not something absurd in

the temporal power of the Pope, consequently

provisory, since he is forced to rely upon the

Austrian and French soldiers? One fact is cer-

tain: the inhabitants of the Roman provinces,

especially in the middle classes, anxiously await

the moment to throw off the yoke of the priests.

In the kingdom of Naples the scene is differ-

ent, but not more satisfactory. Here are no for-

eign soldiers, excepting Swiss regiments; but

detestable laws, an inquisitorial police, a nation

of beggars, and a suspicious, distrustful mon-

arch, who thinks that terror is the best system of

government. This King Ferdinand is indeed a

curious phenomenon in the nineteenth century.

He has the habits and manners of an ancient

Satrap of Asia. Imprisoned in his palace, sur-

rounded by a numerous guard, and not com-

municating with his subjects but when he attends

the ceremonies of the Church, he seems to have

no aim than to maintain his position during the

rest of his reign. The progress of arts and

commerce would only be a source of alarm to

him. He would dread to have the Neapolitans

become active and rich; for wealth would

diminish their servility. If he could,

Ferdinand would build around his kingdom a

new Chinese wall.

This state of things cannot last; it is opposed

to the whole course of modern civilization. All

intelligent Neapolitans are ashamed of the de-

gradation of their country; and like the inhab-

itants of the Pontifical States, they will seize

the first favorable occasion to overthrow so weak

and contemptible a government.

In the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, excesses are

not carried to such an extent; but the reigning

prince Leopold is a feeble man, subjected to the

two-fold influence of the clergy and of Austria.

The revolution of 1848 seemed to have deranged

his mind. He sees everywhere the phantom

of democracy, and these silly visions prevent

him giving the least satisfaction to the wishes

of his subjects. He was disposed, some time

ago, to sign a concordat with the Court of Rome

which would have destroyed the Leopoldine in-

stitutions, the best work of his predecessors.

But the counsel of his ministers hindered him

from committing such a gross fault. The Tus-

cans are awaiting in their turn a more liberal

state of affairs.

I will not speak of the Duchy of Modena, the

Duchy of Parma, and other small countries of

the Peninsula. Things are nearly the same

everywhere: degenerate princes, continually

occupied in repressing the most lawful aspira-

tions of their subjects: an intolerant and despot-

ical clergy, using religion to further their own

ambitious views and their avarice;—poor inhab-

itants systematically kept in ignorance;—the

open and the secret action of Austria which pa-

ralyses all efforts for liberty;—the discontent of

the enlightened portion of the population, which

sighs for the restoration of independence and

Italian nationality.

The position of Piedmont is wholly different:

she forms a striking contrast to the other pro-

vinces of Italy. King Victor Emmanuel seems

animated with truly liberal sentiments: he has

obeyed faithfully the charter given by his noble

and unfortunate father, Charles Albert. His

prime minister, the Count de Cavour, is a states-

man of ability, intelligent, firm, and ready to do

everything that is reasonable for the freedom of

the country. He lately made an excursion into

Switzerland and France, in order to awaken sym-

pathy for his government.

The Piedmontese have shown in their legis-

lative debates, and upon the battle fields of the

Crimea, that they are worthy of freedom. They

are enlightened, firm and brave. They long to re-

cover their defeat at Novara, and to march in the

van of Italy against the Austrians. Their mili-

tary preparations are as extensive as the revenues

of the public treasury and the number of the in-

habitants permit. They have about 80,000 men

under arms: a large number for such a small

population.

Victor Emmanuel has announced to his officers

that war might soon break out, and his words

have gone all over Europe. Certainly this prince

and his council wish to renew the contest against

the Austrian soldiers. Italy calls to them, she

awaits the aid of their arms. But Piedmont hes-

itates to take this decisive step, and her caution is

wise. Left to its own strength, two painful ex-

periments have proved that Piedmont would prob-

ably be conquered by the Austrians, and the last

bulwark of Italian independence would be de-

stroyed. It must be observed that the Popish

clergy of Piedmont is very much opposed to the

new order of affairs, and wishes the Germans to

triumph. The aristocracy are divided. Victor

Emmanuel cannot go forward if he has not pow-

erful allies.

The matter rests with France. Let Louis Na-

poleon utter a word of encouragement; let him

promise to send a French army beyond the Alps,

in case of reverses, and before three months all

Italy will be in arms. But where is this word,

this promise? A thousand contradictory rumors

circulate on this subject, and the public anxiously

inquire what will be the result.

On one side, according to the testimony of well

informed persons, Louis Napoleon inclines to a

war against Austria. He is dissatisfied with the

Cabinet of Vienna, which creates all sorts of em-

barrassments in the affairs of the East. He

would like to distinguish his reign by military

exploits, placing himself at the head of the ar-

my. His ambition would be especially to make

anew the map of Europe, and to annex at least

Savoy to France, and give to the King of Pied-

mont part of the Austrian possessions. Besides,

he feels that the French people need the glory of

war to make them forget the loss of liberty.