

# CHRISTIAN

# VISITOR.



A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence.

REV. E. D. VERY,

"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

EDITOR.

Volume II.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1849.

Number 37.

## HARVEST HYMN.

God of the year! with songs of praise,  
 And hearts of love, we come to bless  
 Thy bounteous hand, for Thou hast shined  
 Thy manna o'er our wilderness;—  
 In early spring-time Thou didst fling  
 O'er earth its robes of blossoming,  
 And its sweet treasures, day by day,  
 Rose quick'ning in Thy blessed ray.

And now they whiten hill and vale,  
 And hang from every vine and tree,  
 Whose pensile branches bending low,  
 Seemed bowed in thankfulness to Thee,—  
 The earth with all its purple isles,  
 Is answering to Thy genial smiles,  
 And gales of perfume breathe along,  
 And lift to Thee their voiceless song.

God of the seasons! Thou hast blest  
 The land with sunlight and with showers,  
 And plenty o'er its bosom smiles,  
 To crown the sweet autumnal hours:  
 Praise, praise to Thee;—Our hearts expand  
 To view the blessings of Thy hand,  
 And on the incense-breath of love,  
 Go off to their bright home above.

*Mrs. Sigourney.*

[From the Independent.]

## THE AZORES, OR WESTERN ISLANDS.

Messrs. Editors:—Having passed several days at Fayal, both on our way to Italy and on our return, I became interested in the history and moral condition of the Azores, or Western Islands, and would avail myself of the columns of *The Independent* in laying such an account of them as a limited opportunity would allow me to collect, before the American public.

The Azores are nine in number, and are situated near the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, extending from latitude 37 degs. to 39 degs. North, and from 25 degs. to 31 degs. West longitude. They are about an equal distance from Europe, Africa, and the West Indies, and will ever form a kind of half-way house to mariners, so long as commercial intercourse is kept up between the nations.

Their names are, St. Michael, St. Mary, Terceira, St. George, Gracioca, Fayal, Pico, Floris, and Corvo. St. Michael is the largest of the group, and Floris and Corvo are the smallest. But Fayal, on account of its convenient land-locked harbour, has the greatest relative importance. Here ships of all sizes can come in to make repairs, and to obtain water, fruits, and other fresh provisions. A steamboat touches here once a month, bound either for England or the West Indies. Our whale-ships, which go round the Horn, generally call here, both when going to the Pacific and on their return; and there is no season, except in mid-winter, but what there are more or less American, English, Portuguese, and Spanish vessels in the harbour of Fayal. The number of our own seamen who are left here by whalers and merchantmen every year ought to make Fayal a place deserving the consideration of those who have an eye to the moral improvement of our race.

From all I could learn from them, and from all I could learn by my own observations when ashore, the opinion is forced upon me that there is hardly another spot on earth where a judicious and truly pious colporteur or seamen's preacher could do more good, or where his labors are more demanded, than at Fayal. Located almost in the center of the ocean, these islands appear to be thrown up here (it is believed by volcanic eruptions) as a city of refuge for the distressed mariner, and making a kind of refreshment house for those who "do business on the great waters." After having sailed more than two thousand miles

from home, and having had in hard weather some experience of the dangers of the seas, to be met here with some kind-hearted messenger of Christ, offering them (and there are thousands who come into Fayal in the course of the year, either going to or from home) some good counsel, or a Bible or tract, it would be taking them by surprise in the midst of the ocean, and at a time when it would be received with a very different spirit than if they were to be offered the same favor in our harbors, or on our wharves. I often had conversation with those who came with us about their feelings on the Sabbath, wandering round, as they were, like sheep without a shepherd. They had no motive to go to church especially if they were not Catholics, as they could not understand a word of the language in which the priest might discourse, after he had gone through with unedifying ceremonies of the service. My inquiries only confirmed my own opinion, that if there was a Protestant teacher on the island who might have a place of worship, and rooms where he could be met with, the wanderers would be sure to gather around him to seek his counsel and aid in this land of strangers, with minds softened by adversity—especially if the colporteur were endowed with those qualities which would enable him to act the part of a friend.

The afternoon at Fayal, and at all the other Catholic countries I have visited, is devoted to small trade and amusements. There is an English boarding-house in Fayal, where our naval officers and those of other vessels generally stop. The lady is from England; her husband is a native of the island. He can speak English, and is also very much of a gentleman. Instructed by his lady, he now disbelieves in the infallibility of the Catholic Church, and rejects many of its usages, although he is not a public seceder. He was required to pay a ludicrous and rather troublesome penance for marrying a Protestant. But it is now all got along with, and he lives in the quiet enjoyment of his interesting family. Mrs. S., his lady, also reads a sermon and prayers with her family every Sabbath morning. A vessel containing emigrants for California put into Fayal, and a large number who took lodgings at this boarding-house retired to an upper room on the Sabbath, and conducted Divine service. Mrs. S. informed me that it was the most interesting Sabbath she ever spent in Fayal. She is not only a Protestant, but a receiver of the evangelical faith. There are not half a dozen families on the island who speak English; but I think the consuls, both English and American, and the other families, would second the efforts of a colporteur, or seamen's preacher. While it might be the leading object of such a laborer to visit our ships which enter the harbor, and to do good on the Sabbath day in the town by stated meetings for our wandering seamen, he might also introduce perhaps, to some extent the scriptures in the Portuguese language among the islanders. This would be, in my opinion, a far more promising field of usefulness than Rev. Mr. Hastings has occupied at Marseilles.

The Azores were settled in the early part of the 15th century by the Portuguese, and have always been, like Madeira, the Canaries, and Cape de Verdes, exclusively Roman Catholic subjects residing in these islands the right to in their religion. But since a treaty between land and Portugal has guaranteed to British Eng-worship God according to their own convictions of duty, the English have built a church at Madeira, also the Scotch Presbyterians, in which they can teach the Protestant faith unmolested. But the intolerant priests, who receive no small part of their income for saying mass both for the living and the dead, feel that

it is their right to keep an eye on these Protestant intruders, to see that they do not make any effort to convert the native inhabitants of the islands. The English rector at Madeira informed me that Dr. Kalley's benevolent labors were greatly respected, until the priests detected a falling off in the number of those who used to employ them for saying mass. He said that Dr. Kalley raised the storm which drove him from the island, not for establishing schools, nor for doing good among the Presbyterian residents, but for drawing away the Portuguese islanders from the Catholic faith. This gentleman is a Puseyite, and confines his labors exclusively to the English residents on the island. But no Protestant church has ever been built at Fayal, and no effort has ever been made, as I could learn, to throw Protestant light into the midst of the moral darkness which covers the Azores.

As to the priests at Fayal, they are illiterate, ignorant of the Scriptures, and many of them profligate in their habits. All this I learned on the best authority. Priests—yes, priests, who are almost every day administering at their altars and attending to the confessionals—have not a copy of the Scriptures in their houses in any language. If ever they have read the Bible it was in the Latin language in their preparatory studies, and which they left behind them at their schools in which they learn Latin by rote, in which language they will recite prayers without understanding what they repeat.

One fact came to my knowledge. A priest lives near by the English boarding-house, whom the landlady regards as among the most moral and regular as to his habits of any of his profession in Fayal. This priest and our landlord were discoursing one day about some saint whom the Azoreans adore, and the priest insisted on the fact that certain duties were enjoined by Jesus Christ respecting this saint. But the landlord, who, since his marriage, has carefully read the Bible, denied that there was anything in the New-Testament about the said saint. In the course of this conversation the priest acknowledged that he had no Bible of any kind. Our landlord proposed to lend him one, and actually sent it to him with the liberty to keep it until he had read it through. But the Testament came back in a few days.—Some of the priests cannot read Latin, but have a way, not only here but in many other places I visited, of learning to say the Latin part of their services by rote, as parrots learn to talk. Thus it is that an old woman at Mahon, who could not read, would repeat her Pater Nosters in Latin equal to any of the priests. Uneducated nuns do the same at the convents.

That many of the priests of Fayal break their vows of celibacy and have mistresses is not attempted to be concealed! How much can be done by such priests to introduce the light of the Gospel judge ye. But I am under the impression that there never could be raised at Fayal such a cruel persecution as has been experienced at Madeira.

There is less wealth and less intelligence at Fayal than at Madeira, and less bustling activity. There is no printing-office at Fayal, and only one in all the Azores. This is located at St. Michael's. They have very few books. All they have come from Lisbon.—Their schools are few. At Fayal there are only two free schools, one for boys and one for girls, among about 8,000 inhabitants. The people can live without much labour, and as they have little motive, under the stinted policy of the Portuguese government, they have very little inclination to cultivate the soil. Besides their heavy taxes, which they are obliged to pay the government, a great many of them are tenants, living on "entailed estates." After

doing all they will, there is but a poor reward left for the labourer.

The people of Fayal appeared to me to have a depressed appearance, as if they had not much to hope for or much self-respect. They know nothing about liberty or self-government. They are decidedly opposed to improvement or innovations upon usages of their ancestors. Take one fact. The cart wheels are made fast to the end of the axletrees, so that instead of the wheels turning on the ends as in our country, the axletree turns with the wheels, on which the cart body is made to stay by stout pins, which extend down, against which the axletree turns. Mr. D., our consul sent to Boston and obtained a cart, to show them how much easier the wheels could be made to turn on the end of the axletree, and with how much less noise—for when one of their loaded carts move, such a squeaking and screeching is heard as to produce a distressing sensation. But the natives could not be reconciled to make the change, and the screeching carts continue as ever to annoy the streets of Fayal.

The climate is mild and healthy, the air bland and salubrious. The productions are corn, wheat, fruits, such as oranges, figs, lemons, apples, bananas and potatoes, and all other garden sauce, with fragrant flowers in great abundance. And with the Gospel of Christ and a good government it seems as if they might be the happiest people in the world.

## THE VATICAN.

The Vatican, which crowns one of the seven hills of Rome, in an assemblage or group of buildings, covering a space of twelve hundred feet in length, and one thousand feet in breadth. It is built upon the spot which was occupied by the gardens of Nero. It owes its origin to the bishop of Rome, who erected an humble residence on its site, in the early part of the sixth century. Pope Eugenius III. rebuilt it on a magnificent scale, about the year 1150. A few years afterwards, Innocent II. gave it up as a lodging to Peter II., King of Arragon. In 1305, Clement V., at the instigation of the King of France, removed the Papal See from Rome to Avignon, when the Vatican remained in a condition of obscurity and neglect for more than seventy years.—But soon after the return of the Pontifical Court at Rome, an event which had been so earnestly prayed for by the poor Petrarch, and which finally took place in 1376, the Vatican was put into a state of repair, again enlarged, and it was thenceforward considered as a regular palace and residence of the Popes, who, one after the other, added fresh buildings to it, and gradually enriched it with iniquities, pictures, and books, until it became the richest repository in the world.

Its library was commenced fourteen hundred years ago. It contains forty thousand manuscripts, among which are some by Pliny, St. Thomas, St. Charles Borromeo, and many Hebrew, Syriac, Arabian, and American Bibles. The whole of the immense buildings composing the Vatican, are filled with statues found beneath the ruins of ancient Rome; with paintings, by the masters, and with curious medals, and antiquities of almost every description. When it is known that there have been exhumed more than seventy thousand statues, from the ruined temples and palaces of Rome, the reader can form some idea of the riches of the Vatican. The Vatican will ever be held in veneration by the student, the artist, and the scholar. Raffaele and Michael Angelo are enthroned there, and their throne will be as durable as the love of beauty and genius in the hearts of their admirers.