



A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence

REV. E. D. VERY,

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

EDITOR.

Volume V.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 1852.

Number 9.

A LITTLE BIRD I AM.

The following poem was composed by Madame Guvon, during her imprisonment. Louis XIV., who had revoked the edict of Nantes, and broken up the assemblies of Protestants by force of arms, was afraid that through the agency of his accomplished lady another Protestantism might threaten the peace of France. He, accordingly, in the exercise of arbitrary power, ordered her to be confined in a small room in the convent of St. Marie.

A little bird I am
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be;
Because, my God, it pleases thee.

Nought have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He, whom most I love to please
Doth listen to my song;
He caught and bound my wandering wing,
But still he bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear;
A heart to love and bless;
And, though my notes were e'er so rude,
Thou would'st not hear the less;
Because Thou knowest as they fall,
That love, sweet love, inspires them all.

My cage confines me round;
Abroad I cannot fly;
But, though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty,
My prison walls cannot controul
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

A TWENTY YEAR'S RETROSPECT.

The LONDON PATRIOT, one of the most valuable of the London Non-Conformist Newspapers, commenced with January last its twenty-first volume. Its leading editorial on that occasion we read with great interest and laid it aside for publication. We now present it to our readers.

A TWENTY YEAR'S RETROSPECT.—The present Number of the *Patriot* will commence the twenty-first annual volume. It may be worth while to cast a retrospective glance at the advance which has been made during the twenty years that have elapsed since the era of the Reform Act, in respect of social improvements, general policy, and moral and religious progress. In the year 1832, it will be recollected, when the *Patriot* was started, the Reform Act was passed; and in the following February, the first Reformed Parliament was opened. And now, as if the revolution of seasons had brought us round to the same point, a new Reform Bill, which is scarcely less imperatively demanded than the former one, is among the Ministerial measures promised to be brought forward in the Session of 1852.—Nevertheless, the Act of 1832 was a great step in legislation, as well as an important civil victory, as it recognised and proclaimed the principle of representative government, and led to the adoption of other great reforms.

Among the substantial results of the fresh impulse given to legislation by the action of popular opinion, we may specify, the emancipation of the slaves in the British Colonies, the opening of the China trade, the reform of Municipal Corporations, the establishment of a system of Civil Registration, the Dissenters' Marriages Act, the Incorporation of Universi-

ty College and other collegiate and literary institutions with the University of London, and the distinct recognition of the great principle, that religious opinions ought not to entail upon any class of the community civil disabilities. If, to these results, we do not add the reform of the Tariff, the repeal of the Corn-laws, and the abolition of the Navigation-laws, it is because these were effected too recently to be regarded as results of the Reform Act, and were not carried by a Reform Ministry. In advocating and urging all these important concessions, the *Patriot* is believed to have exerted no inconsiderable influence. We may also refer to the abolition of the Irish Vestry Cess, to the Irish Church Temporalities Act, and to some other acts of a liberal character, as among the first-fruits of that Reform in the Representation which for a while governed the Ministerial policy, till the inherent defects in the Reform Act were taken advantage of for the purpose of nullifying its intention and effect, and the representative principle became again merged in aristocratic nomination and an organized system of corruption. Finally succeeded to Reform; and thus, at the expiration of twenty years from the period when the Protestant Dissenters were invited to expose their grievances, and led to expect redress from a Government they had assisted in raising to power,—in spite of the concessions made to the Irish Romanists, and in violation of the repeated Resolutions of the House of Commons,—we find ourselves as far from obtaining the complete removal of these grievances, apparently, as ever. Who, twenty years ago, could have anticipated that the abolition of the Spiritual Courts, the barbarous relics of priestly usurpation, condemned by the report of an Ecclesiastical Commission, would have been postponed upon shuffling pretences, session after session, and still remain to be accomplished? Who would have imagined, that the vexatious nuisance of Church-rates, which, in 1833, the Whig Government brought in a Bill to do away with, would require, in 1851, to be made the subject of special inquiry by a Select Committee, as if there could be a question as to either the injustice of the exaction or the expediency of putting an end to this ever-recurring cause of strife and ill-will? Again, notwithstanding that, in Ireland, the ministers of other Denominations than the Established Church have the legal privilege of performing the rites of burial in the parochial grounds, this right is still withheld from Protestant Dissenters in England; and even in the new public Cemeteries, the Legislature has sanctioned an invidious demarcation, which, originating in priestcraft, serves only to perpetuate superstition and bigotry.—Once more, notwithstanding the abundant proof that has been afforded of the futility of subscription to doctrinal Articles as a test of orthodoxy, or a preservative against infidelity or heresy, the University of Oxford, while open to knaves and Jesuits, remains barred against the admission of conscientious Dissenters, while the sister University reserves her honours for those who have no scruples. In these respects, so far as legislation is concerned, instead of having made progress, the cause of Religious Liberty has lost ground in consequence of a High Church re-action.

The ecclesiastical history of the last twenty years presents to us a similar aspect of movement and counter-movement, progress and re-action. The most prominent features are, the formation and development of the Tractarian conspiracy; the disruption in the Scottish Establishment, and the noble secession which gave birth to the Free Church; the new phase which an old controversy has assumed, in the agitation of the Voluntary question in Scotland, and the Anti-State Church movement in

England; the intestine disputes which have convulsed the Established Church,—the HAMPDEN controversy, the GORHAM case, the Surplice question, the National Education schism, and the Convocation clamour; then, the numerous secessions from the Anglican to the Romish pale, and the bold aggressive attitude assumed by Ultramontane Popery in this country and in Ireland. In each and all of these transactions and occurrences, we discern the elements of good and evil commingling and struggling for ascendancy. Unquestionably, the concerns of Religion have come to occupy more earnest consideration, on the part as well of our rulers and statesmen as of the community at large. A more religious tone is observable in the debates of the Senate and in the discussions of the Press. Infidelity itself has become more religious, cloaking itself in philosophy and mysticism. Puseyism, with all its antics and grimace, has stirred up the stagnant depths of formalism, and put to shame the more scandalous desecration of the ministerial office. Things that differ as widely as colours, which nevertheless agree in the dark, are now better and more generally discriminated. The British nation is beginning to shake off that lethargy of a dreamy latitudinarianism which rendered its Protestantism equivocal, and almost poured contempt upon the Reformation. We might advert here to the advance which has been gained for what heretofore have been regarded as Dissenting principles; but we must reserve a more particular review of the progress of Dissent for another opportunity. Our ecclesiastical retrospect would, however, be incomplete, did we not refer to the three new eccentric varieties of Sectarianism which have sprung up, or assumed a compact form, during the period we are reviewing; the "holy catholic apostolic" Church of those whom we have been accustomed to call Irvingites; the Plymouth Sandemanians who style themselves "Brethren;" and the Mormonites; each of them only a varied form of an epidemic fanaticism which has sprung up from time to time, but has taken other names.

In drawing this rapid retrospect to a close, we can only briefly enumerate some of those great mechanic and economic improvements which produced, and are still working, a sensible change in our social habits, and are fraught more or less, with results which it is difficult to estimate. Twenty years ago, it took nearly two days to reach either Scotland or Ireland from the Metropolis; the transit may now be made in twelve or thirteen hours. The voyage to America, the New World of COLUMBUS, commonly occupied a month; it is now ordinarily a passage of ten or eleven days. The voyage to India occupied six months, the Cape being a half-hay house; and to reach Calcutta overland in three or four months, was held to be good travelling; now, India is reached in thirty days, and we have a bi-monthly mail which brings intelligence only twenty days less recent from the Indian Ocean and the Yellow Sea. Such are the wonders accomplished by the iron road and the iron sea-horse, through the magic agency of steam. But more marvellous still, is the transmission by the "winged lightning" of electricity, which literally outstrips the speed of time, and almost annihilates distance. Twenty years ago, what had occurred in Paris on Monday, might be known here on Wednesday; we now could learn in London by two o'clock, what has happened at Paris at noon. No fugitive can travel so swiftly, though at a rate which would, not long ago, have been deemed fabulous, that he may not be overtaken and passed by the messenger that shall frustrate his escape. Communications may be exchanged, in a few minutes, between parties hundreds of

miles apart; and by the establishment of the submarine telegraph with the opposite coast of the Continent, a message might be transmitted to Vienna or Trieste, in less time than it takes to deliver a letter by the Metropolitan Penny Post at Clapham or Hampstead. But the Penny Post itself is an inestimable boon. How could we now do without it? Not a day passes in which, in thousands of families, this thought is not suggested by the welcome missive. Christmas roses are blooming before us, gathered hundreds of miles away, and safely brought us by the faithful Post. And how considerable is the saving of expense as well as the convenience to families, to merchants and traders, and to public societies! Other mechanical and economical improvements will occur to our readers, which we need not stop to enumerate. We have specified those which tend to the most important social results, but must not forget to notice those improvements in agriculture, which, by increasing the productiveness of the soil, and diminishing the cost of production, are adding every year to the wealth of the country. Nor must we overlook the most important discovery of the first half of the present Century, whatever influence it is destined to exert upon our commerce or our currency; we allude to the mineral riches so unexpectedly brought to light in the deserts of California, and more recently in our Australian territories. But the greatest marvel of all, is the prodigious expansion of our commerce, wealth, and territorial empire. During the twenty years that have elapsed since the Reform Act, the trade and manufactures of this country have made the most gigantic strides. Many branches of industry have doubled themselves. The increase in the cotton, woollen, silk, linen, and hardware trades, as indicated by the declared value of our exports, has been quite enormous. Some of the results are shown by the following tabular statement:—

	DECLARED VALUES OF BRITISH EXPORTS.	
	1832.	1849.
Cotton goods	17,500,000	26,775,000
Woollen goods	4,728,000	7,342,000
Silk goods	521,000	998,000
Linen goods (1834)	2,579,000	4,225,000
Hardware and cutlery	1,410,000	2,201,000
Brass and copper goods,	867,000	1,865,000

The population of Great Britain has, in twenty years, increased from some sixteen to twenty-one millions. The increase of wealth must have been prodigious to sustain an aggregate expenditure of 355 millions sterling upon the mere formation of railway communications, without exhausting the trading capital of the country. And to what, under a benignant and merciful Providence, do we owe all this prosperity? To the spirit of freedom, which has moulded our institutions, and which recognises the sovereignty of Law; to the spirit of commerce and enterprise, which can develop itself only under free institutions and equal laws; and, above all, to the vital influence of Protestant belief and evangelical piety largely diffused through the mass of the community, and maintaining the high standard of our national morality.

MISSION TO TERRA DEL FUEGO.

Intelligence has been received by the Patagonian Mission Society of the death of a party of seven persons, namely, Captain Gardiner, Mr. Williams (a surgeon, of Burslem), Mr. Maidment, three seamen, and a ship's carpenter, who sailed from Liverpool on the 7th September, 1850, to attempt to establish a Mission at Terra del Fuego. It appears from a journal kept by one of the party (r. Williams), that he and his companions encountered much hostility from the natives; but their deaths were caused, not so much by violence as by want of food and exposure to the weather.

Mrs. John G. B. G.