

READ FOX'S BOOK OF MARTYRS ALSO

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transition during which the spirit of the Sabbath-law was struggling amid many embarrassments and against many barriers, to conquer for itself, as the bright Lord's Day, all the observance proper to the Sabbath-law, with more of gladness and of grace than had been known under the Jewish dispensation; how the trans-

migration was at length completely effected, and the Lord's Day recognised as the lineal heir of all the high claims and honour and immunities which had belonged to the Sabbath, with added irradiation of the Christian glory; all this belongs to a later stage in this discussion.

THE WALDENSES.

JERUSALEM alone excepted, no city can boast an interest so world-wide and varied as Rome. No visitor to that renowned city can view with indifference the Scipios' tomb, the forum where Cicero thundered, or the spot where Cæsar fell; but if the stranger be a Christian, Rome will have to him other than classic memories; and he will seek out with a yet deeper interest the spots associated with two men who have done more for the world than either Cicero or Cæsar,—Paul the Apostle and Luther the Reformer.

Writing to Timothy of Onesiphorus, Paul says, "When he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me." But though we should seek ever so diligently, we cannot expect, after 1800 years, to find the "hired house" where St. Paul dwelt for "two whole years, and received all that came in unto him";—yet it may interest some readers to mention that, while residing in Rome last spring, the writer saw a house whose threshold it is at least possible Paul may frequently have crossed. Of the three hundred and sixty-five churches in Rome, one of the oldest and quaintest is that of St. Pudentiana (of which, by the way, Cardinal Wiseman was the titular incumbent). The foundation of this church, if we remember aright, dates as early as that of Westminster Abbey—the eighth or ninth century—and the tradition has always been that it was built on or over the house of Pudens, one of Paul's Roman brethren, (2 Tim. iv. 21.) It was only, however, within a very recent period that excavations made beneath the church itself have revealed the curious fact that here, many feet below the level of the modern city, there does exist an ancient Roman dwelling of several chambers, which when first discovered were filled by the rubbish of centuries. This house we visited with no common interest: and as we descended by torchlight into its long-silent chambers, it was strange to think that these vaulted roofs, whose plaster still retains rude and faded frescoes, may have looked down on this early Christian and his family, and perchance resounded to the voice of Paul.

The so-called house of Pudens may after all have no better foundation than tradition. But the Appian Way needs no tradition to attest its identity: and as one treads that gigantic causeway, and with the eye follows its southward course straight as an arrow for miles across the breezy Campagna, through the vista of eighteen centuries we seem to see a group approaching. It is Paul and his fellow-prisoners in charge of Julius, the good-hearted centurion; and with them that band of loving Roman Christians who had gone thirty long miles to escort the great Apostle from Appii Forum to Rome, (Acts xxviii. 15.)

Paul had appealed to Cæsar. Let us follow him to Nero's judgment hall. But can we identify the very spot? We believe we can. The colossal ruins on the Palatine Hill, known as "the Palace of the Cæsars," speak for themselves; but until Napoleon III., some years since, purchased them from the Pope and commenced excavations which are still advancing, it was impossible to distinguish the chamber we are in search of amid the rubbish that encumbered the whole mass of building. The visitor can now happily identify the Tribunal of the Palace, the very apartment, in all probability, where Paul faced the emperor. Its walls and roof are gone. It lies open to the brilliant sunshine—exposed, as the unjust deeds once enacted there shall one day also be. But a semicircular bench of marble running round the upper end of the spacious hall, and a raised space in the centre for the imperial chair, reveal the intention of the chamber; as does also the marble ledge which, traversing the breadth of the floor, supported a balustrade to separate the prisoner at the bar from his judges beyond. Of this balustrade, or railing, happily a portion four or five feet in length and about three feet high still remains *in situ* and entire—its pure white marble of admirably carved openwork well-nigh as fresh as if chiselled by living hands. Standing to-day against this marble barrier—standing, as it were, in the very footprints of Paul, one reads with an altogether new interest those memorable words, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Nevertheless, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." "The second epistle unto Timotheus . . . was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time."

Nearly fifteen centuries have come and gone when a friar from Wittemberg is seen approaching the seven-hilled city; and as in the distance he catches the first glimpse of the capital of Catholicism, he throws himself on the ground, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!" He is not long, however, within its walls ere he discovers his mistake. The Church which, in 1510, Luther found in Rome was very different from that to which Paul wrote an epistle, and whose members he instructed with his living voice. That visit to Rome had mighty consequences for Luther and for the world. "I would not take," said he, "a hundred thousand florins not to have seen Rome." And why? Because the sight opened his eyes to the hypocrisy and vileness which hid themselves under the purple and the scarlet within

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Rome's most sacred shrines. Luther learned in Rome itself how revolting was the contrast between the Paul and the Peter of his New Testament and their pretended successors. But the truth dawned on him by degrees. For a time he officiated in the churches of Rome, and we were specially interested by visiting one in particular, close by the Porta del Popolo, whose interior is crowded with ancient monuments, and where Luther often said mass, and sometimes preached. Nor could we leave Rome without seeing the "Santa Scala" for Luther's sake, if not for its own. This "Santa Scala," or Holy Stair, is believed by Papists to have been brought from Jerusalem, and to be the veritable staircase which led to Pilate's Judgment Hall, and therefore consecrated by the Saviour's footsteps. A sad spectacle it presented as we saw it one day last Easter. Some dozen of men and women (two French soldiers among the rest) were painfully ascending it on their knees, telling their beads at every step. In the very same act of blind devotion we remembered that Martin Luther was engaged 360 years ago; when there thrilled through his disquieted spirit a voice from heaven which seemed to call in trumpet tones, "The just shall live by faith." In that moment the "Holy Stair" lost all its virtue. He rose from his knees a believing man. The truth had made him free.

But what, it may be asked, connects Rome, Paul, or Luther with the Waldenses? Not a little, as we shall see. Papists in all ages have endeavoured to parry assaults on their faith and practice, by taking refuge in the alleged antiquity and universal sway of their church. They allege that our doctrines and worship are, so to speak, of yesterday. To this we reply, with all the Reformers, that the Church of the Reformation was no new church—that, on the contrary, the truths which in the sixteenth century broke the power of Rome in Switzerland, in France, in Germany and in Britain, were the same old truths which conquered the Paganism of Greece and Rome in primitive times. We utterly deny the claim of that church which has its seat in Rome to be the true representative of the Roman Christianity of Paul's day; and we affirm that the faith which Calvin and Luther proclaimed is the very faith in which the confessors of the Roman Catacombs lived and died—the very faith which early martyrs sealed in the Colliseum with their blood.

It is at this point, and to bear testimony to this very thing, that we wish to call a special witness into court. Who is this witness? She comes forth from her lone mountain home in Northern Italy. She is old, very old, but her eye is not dim, neither is her natural strength abated. She is poor, but she has ever borne an unsullied fame, and has come chastened out of many a sore tribulation. Our witness is the ancient suffering Church of the Waldenses. Possessing for long centuries her own standards, worship, and discipline, this Church maintains that she has never been subject to the yoke of Rome. Her very enemies cannot deny that she was alive not only at the era of the Reformation, but for many centuries previous to that great event. She herself maintains that she was alive

long ere Rome acquired ecclesiastical supremacy in Europe—that her evidence, in fact, goes back to the times of the primitive Church. If, then, the Romanist ask contemptuously, Where was your church before Luther?—we reply, Its doctrines were in the Word of God, and its worship was preserved among the Waldenses.

It was in early May of last year that the writer had the happiness to spend nearly a fortnight among this interesting people, and to visit most of those historic spots in their territory which truly entitle it to be called "consecrated ground." And should any of my readers contemplate a visit to Italy, I may be permitted to suggest from my own experience how grateful a visit to the Waldensian valleys will be found after a sojourn in Naples and Rome. All who know anything of the inner life of Naples will mourn how truly of that city and its delicious environs we may say with the poet,

"Here every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

No doubt the Waldensians have the faults of other men; but among these simple mountaineers the traveller will be sure to find the utmost courtesy of manner allied to a high tone of moral purity. It is exceedingly refreshing, too, being wearied with the mummery and mere scenic display of what is called "Holy Week" in Rome, to get away to the quiet solitudes of these wooded mountains, and to join, when the Lord's Day comes, in the simple worship of these Christian peasants—a worship which, to one from Scotland especially, brings home-scenes vividly to mind. Or should one of my readers, whose tendencies are amiable and æsthetic, find an Easter week in Rome to have had quite the opposite effect from that which we have supposed: should he find (as some have done) his traditional horror of Popery melting away under the beaming smile of Pio Nono, as, borne shoulder high along the resounding nave of St. Peter's, he waves his paternal blessing on kneeling faithful and unbending heretic alike;—and, what with the music and the magnificence, should he begin to doubt whether the Church of Rome be so evil after all,—then a visit to the Waldenses will prove an admirable tonic and corrective to his moral system. Let our supposed friend acquaint himself with this people's history—let him, in sight of the very scenes themselves, learn what they have endured for righteousness' sake—let him, in the pages of Leger, read of the fiendish rage and bloody cruelties inflicted by Rome and her emissaries on an unoffending people, and he will know what an intolerant and intolerable system Popery is. Try to circulate the Italian Bible in Rome at this present hour, and you are imprisoned or expelled for your pains. But here, in the Waldensian valleys of Piedmont, every house has its open Bible in the people's own tongue; and as you worship God in their humble temples, and hear how faithfully the one Mediator is proclaimed, the stage-oratory of the preacher at the Gesu in Rome will seem a poor substitute for this bread of life; and the wild cadence of these poor mountaineers, as they raise their simple hymns, will touch a deeper chord in your heart than the best sung *Miserere* at the Vatican.

When one has himself become interested in a subject and studied it a little, he wonders to find so little information about it among persons otherwise well informed, forgetting that not long ago the case was his own; and perhaps I shall do no injustice to some of my readers if I take it for granted that their ideas about the Waldenses are somewhat vague and obscure. Waldenses and Albigenses, Vaudois and the Canton de Vaud—these perfectly distinct subjects are in some minds confused together. The locality of the Albigenses was in France, on the other side of the Alps, and as a distinct religious community they exist no more. The Waldenses again, though in the French language invariably styled Vaudois, have nothing to do with the Canton de Vaud, which I need hardly say belongs to Switzerland. The Waldenses or Vaudois are Italian Protestants, subjects of Victor Emmanuel while King of Sardinia, and now when King of Italy. The valleys where they dwell are in the north of Italy, and lie at the foot of the eastern chain of the Alps, known specifically as the Cottian Alps, which here separate Italy from France. The resemblance of Italy, as represented on a map, to a boot has been often remarked; and it may help to define the precise locality of the Waldensian valleys in the reader's mind to say that they occupy a little corner of the boot just where it would touch the knee.

This territory is small. Somewhat triangular in shape, about twenty miles in length, by some eighteen at the broadest parts, it is almost entirely mountainous in character, and encloses three principal valleys—by name Lucernæ, San Martino, and Perosa—with several smaller and wilder glens going off from these; the streams which descend these valleys forming some of the many ramifications which ultimately gather themselves into the great river of Italy, the Po. The present population is about 23,000 souls. Both Protestants and Romanists are found through the whole district; but taking an average of the entire territory the Protestants outnumber the Romanists in the proportion of seven to one.

Had these valleys no other charm than that of mere natural beauty, they would be well worthy our turning aside from the beaten track of tourists. We had been told they were very picturesque, but "the half had not been told" us. True, they do not admit of comparison with the grand passes of the high Alps in Switzerland, but they have attractions which in Swiss scenery we wholly miss. We have never seen in Switzerland umbrageous foliage to compare with that which clothes the mountain slopes of Piedmont, and while the eye is distressed in many of the finest Swiss valleys by the opaque and dirty white of their glacier water, here, the gushing mountain streams are transparent as crystal itself. But I shall have occasion again to speak of the natural features of this district in connection with localities memorable in the stirring annals of the Vaudois; and therefore, attractive as the subject is, I pass it for the present, to ask my reader's attention to two special claims which the Church of these valleys has on our interest and sympathy.

I. Her past history.

II. Her present position.

I. The past history of the Waldensian Church presents two outstanding features, on both of which I wish to touch, though my space prevents me doing justice to either. And here I may say that such of my readers as desire fuller information on the whole subject would do well to read some of the following books (and I mention but a few of those which are accessible): in English, Sir S. Morland's "History of the Churches of Piemont;" Dr. Henderson's "Vaudois;" Dr. Gilly's "Waldensian Researches," his article in Encycl. Britt., and Miss Williams' "History of the Waldensian Church"—in French, the works of Peyran, Leger, Muston, or Monastier.

The past history of the Waldensian Church embraces two points—her antiquity and her sufferings.

(1.) The antiquity of the Waldensian Church.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
E'en them who kept thy truth so pure of old
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones."

So wrote John Milton two hundred years ago. The two latter lines discover to us that in his day the faith of the Waldenses was known to be ancient as well as pure. We cannot enter here into the much-controverted question of the precise origin and antiquity of the Waldensian Church, but we unhesitatingly claim for it the high distinction of being the oldest Evangelical Church that exists in Europe; and for the twofold proof of this claim we point to the pages of ancient history, and to the evidence furnished by the Waldensian manuscripts. Among the latter, an ancient version of the New Testament, in the dialect of the Waldenses (three MSS. copies of which exist, of dates between the 12th and 14th centuries) proves that in these remote valleys a vernacular version of the Word of God was circulating some centuries before it had been translated into our own tongue, or into that of any other people—a most striking fact! And when we point to what we are pleased to call the venerable standards of our different Churches here at home, we should remember that they are documents of yesterday when placed alongside of the yellow parchments, some in the library of Geneva, others in that of Cambridge, which are veritable manuscripts in the Waldensian dialect. Collected in the Valleys in the times of persecution, they had been handed down among these people since the distant time whose date they bear—a period of more than 700 years. I do wish that space permitted me to make some extracts from that most curious poem, the "Nobla Leyzon," which with the Confession of Faith, the Catechism, and the tracts called "Antichrist" and "Purgatory" set forth the truth and exposed the corruptions of Rome. The fact that such writings were at so distant an era as the 12th century composed by men living in these remote solitudes, plainly indicates that long before even that date a people existed there who were separate from the Roman Church and familiar in their own tongue with the Word of God. A conclusion this which is amply borne out by the statements of ancient historians—themselves Papists, and therefore not likely to give partial testimony in a matter like this.

Some of my readers doubtless have heard the

origin of the Waldensian Church assigned to Peter Waldo, the merchant Reformer of Lyons in the twelfth century; leaving us to infer that, prior to that date, the people of the Valleys were sitting under the shadow of Popish darkness. The fact that Waldo's name bears a similarity to the designation Waldenses is probably the source of this, as we believe, untenable statement. Waldo was a French, not an Italian "Reformer before the Reformation," whose followers in his own day were invariably called "the poor men of Lyons," and never "Waldenses." Moreover, it does seem unaccountable that the Waldenses themselves never spoke of Waldo as their founder—(had he been so, they had no more reason to be ashamed of him than we of Knox in Scotland). On the contrary, they have at every period of their history asserted that the truth had been retained among them since its first proclamation in Northern Italy after the Apostolic age.

Let us now glance (and we can do no more) at what ancient history itself says in regard to this assertion. The following testimony on the point is most important:—"With the dawn of history," writes Sir James Mackintosh, "we discover some simple Christians in the valleys of the Alps, where they still exist under the ancient name of Vaudois, who, by the light of the New Testament, saw the extraordinary contrast between the purity of primitive times, and the vices of the gorgeous and imperial hierarchy which surrounded them."

It were vain to expect that we should be able to define accurately each several link of the chain which connects the existing Waldensian Church with the Apostolic age; but just as in a dark night at sea you can trace the direction of your landing-place by the lights planted at intervals along the winding shore, so do the scattered hints which come to light here and there of the existence during the dark ages of a "peculiar people" in the Cottian Alps, indi-

cate a line which, if followed out, leads us to the conviction that the faith of the Waldenses has come down to them from primitive times. Their documents, as we have seen, go back to A.D. 1100. Then in the 9th century we find that remarkable man, Claude, Bishop of Turin, who may truly be styled a Reformer within the Church herself, accused in 840 by Jonas of Orleans, not only of personal heterodoxy, but of encouraging persons "in the neighbourhood of his diocese" in their rejection of image worship, and separation from what Jonas styles "Catholic unity." Ascending the stream of time to the 4th century, we find Jerome recording that Vigilantius, the opponent of ecclesiastical corruption in that early age, had taken refuge among the Cottian Alps (the very locality where the Waldenses still exist), because there he found a people, holding sentiments similar to his own. This carries us up to the year 396;—and we know that towards the end of the 2nd century the Gospel had penetrated from Italy into Gaul, across the Alpine barrier that divides the two countries. Who can doubt that these early missionaries, carrying with them the seed of the kingdom, scattered some of it as they passed on their way across the Alps?—where, falling among those secluded valleys, it grew; and, sheltered by the encircling mountains, was preserved through long centuries in native vigour, unblighted by the blasts of error which swept across the plains of central Italy.

He must be strangely blind who does not perceive a special Providence in the history of this ancient Church and people: a Providence, whose wondrous ways we hope yet more clearly to unfold, when we come to tell how amidst persecutions almost unequalled, this bush of the wilderness burned, yet was not consumed—and how, also, through the liberation of Italy in our day, slips from this venerable tree are now being planted over the length and breadth of that most interesting land.

D. K. GUTHRIE.

SEEDS.

THE seeds of all the noblest plants
Take longest time to grow:
The acorns lie for many weeks
Before their first leaves show.

And children who have sown them come
And look about their bed,
And say, because they lie so long,
"Our acorns must be dead."

But when they sow their mustard-seed,
They need not wait for long:
In but a week, like rank young weed,
It grows up green and strong.

Dear faithless heart, among the seeds
A lesson thou canst find,
For growth's great laws are just the same
In them as in the mind.

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thirty days all Israel mourns for Aaron, and then the work of life goes on without him: the stream has quickly closed over the life that has sunk in it, and God's work, once his, is now another's. Few men, I imagine, read unmoved the record of this end. The scene is before us, in the pages of Holy Scripture, as no picture and no traveller's tale could paint it: and I have called this death in the wilderness, and one other, a lesson of submission. It shows us the servant offering up life itself in duty, and then accepting, as one part of duty, the chastisement which takes life away. It shows us that, when God chastens, yea, when God punishes, yea, if God even inflicts death itself as the penalty of an individual sin, there is no proof there of his condemnation: He has done all things well: He honoured his servant with his great commission, and if He visits his sin with scourges, He is his Master and his Father and his Redeemer still.

2. The one life is taken, and the other is doomed. No long time, it is probable, elapses between the two deaths; between the sepulchre of Hor and the sepulchre of Pisgah. The weary wanderings of the desert were nearly accomplished by both the brothers: now the whole generation which left Egypt, save two persons, has passed away: when they number Israel "in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho," there is not found among them one man numbered before in the wilderness of Sinai, but Caleb only and Joshua: and now the leader and the lawgiver must himself die: the last death in the wilderness is the death of Moses; that strangest and most mysterious of all departures; not, like Aaron's decease, soothed by the presence of a loving son and brother, but accomplished in solitude and silence, the Lord showing him all the land of promise, the Lord closing his eyes, and the Lord burying him. O marvellous combina-

tion of "the goodness and severity of God!" The penalty enforced to the letter, but so enforced as to turn it into the highest of honours and the tenderest of consolations! Not by punishment is love forfeited: not because of punishment is the nomenclature of love changed. It is "Moses the servant of the Lord" who dies there in the land of Moab: and when the Divine voice speaks for the first time directly to Joshua the son of Nun, the "minister" and the successor, it still speaks as of one tenderly loved and cared for, "Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise thou, and go over this Jordan!" The last death in the wilderness is a death without sting. He of whom God can say when he is departed, "My servant is dead," must indeed be not so much dead as sleeping; he is in the Lord's hand still, and God will not for ever leave his soul in hell. He still lives to Him who both quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were.

Let us all enter, if we have not entered yet, upon that service, which is indeed perfect freedom and tenderest love. Let us place ourselves, if we have not placed ourselves yet, under the guidance of that hand which, even when it corrects, loves still; yea, because it loves, rebukes and chastens. So, when death comes—when the dark valley must be traversed, and the deep swift river crossed—we will fear no evil. He who has been our guide unto death will guide us through death: and when He has laid us to rest, in a tomb still marked by his loving eye, will say of us to the generation which survives to take up his unfinished, his unending work, "My servant is dead"—now arise ye, and minister to me in his place, that, in the great day of Christ's appearing, "both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together!"

C. J. VAUGHAN.

THE WALDENSES.

PART. II.—THEIR PAST HISTORY AND SUFFERINGS.

"Halt, passenger! take heed what you do see,
This stone doth tell for what some men did die."

Thus run the first two lines of that quaint metrical inscription which many a visitor to Edinburgh has read on the "Martyrs' Monument" in the Greyfriars Churchyard. We remember being there on a spring morning some years ago in company with a revered friend from England. The sun shone full on the great upright stone between its flanking pillars; the grass beneath was enamelled by early daisies; while all around there was a "stillness calm and holy" that accorded with the place and the scene. My friend, after gazing on the spot awhile in silence, began to read aloud the old inscription, his tones gathering increased animation as line after line recounted cruel wrongs endured, and heroic faith displayed. After the poetry there follows this record:—"From 1661 to 1688 there were executed at Edinburgh about an hundred of noblemen, gentlemen, ministers, and others; noble martyrs for Jesus Christ. The

most of them lie here." Beneath the slab itself, carved on an open Bible, there follows this grand and solemn passage from the Apocalypse: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord . . ." Having read thus far, I perceived my friend's lips quiver, and his eyes fill with tears. The remaining words were read in silence—the words of God's own book going right to the heart as no others can. The place and the circumstances gave to this passage of sacred Scripture a depth and solemnity it might not have had elsewhere. We were standing within a bow-shot of the spot where many, whose bones lay beneath, had sealed their testimony with their blood. The intervening two hundred years seemed to shrink out of sight, and the great future day to draw near, when a response shall be given to

that question—"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

Far away from Scotland last spring, on our way from Turin to La Tour, the little capital of the Waldensian valleys, when their wooded mountains rose to view, it seemed as if we were approaching "consecrated ground;" and when, within the valleys themselves, we visited scene after scene associated with the sufferings of those who kept Christ's word and did not deny his name, it seemed as if the whole territory had a sacredness, and every hamlet might have its "Martyrs' Monument." If our patriotism should be kindled on the field of Marathon, and our piety grow warmer amid the ruins of Iona, certainly it would be strange if one who knows what these rocks and mountain-sides have witnessed, could visit this renowned territory without a deepened reverence for the power of conscience, and an increased abhorrence of the system that would strangle its freedom.

An old Waldensian writer, speaking of the distinctive marks by which his and every true Church might be known, gives these three: "Simple conformity to the sacred word: a holy life: persecution and the Cross." Persecution and the Cross! Yes, this last mark she can truly be said to have borne throughout all her history. It does not indeed so forcibly arrest attention in her remote past as in later times; yet even so far back as the ninth century, we have historical evidence that the existence of a people in these valleys who abjured the Roman yoke was most obnoxious to the bigots of that intolerant creed. The Waldenses had then a friend, it is true, in the good Claude, Bishop of Turin; but a letter is extant from a brother prelate, angrily calling him to account for his lenity towards the heretics who dwelt near his diocese. Again, in 1198, previous to the acquisition of Piedmont by the House of Savoy, we find a decree of Otho IV., Emperor of Germany, commanding the then Bishop of Turin to exterminate from his whole diocese those "*heretiques Vaudoises* who attack the Catholic faith, and teach pernicious error." During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Waldenses suffered less within their own territory than in France and Germany, where at that epoch they were largely spread—their numbers in Europe being at one period so high as 80,000. To confine our attention, however, to the persecutions within the valleys themselves, it may safely be said that for a period of 400 years, i.e., from the beginning of the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the Church and people within that little territory were exposed to a succession of assaults so fierce, that the story of their preservation is without a parallel anywhere else in the world. The Waldenses themselves recount thirty-six distinct persecutions to which they have been subjected; all of them designed to force them to yield up their ancient faith, and some of them distinctly planned to secure their extermination from the face of the earth.

The story of these persecutions, written like Ezekiel's roll within and without with lamentations and mourning and woe, cannot be detailed in a few pages. It would fill a volume. It has filled volumes.

Let my readers open for themselves the pages of Leger or Monastier, and they will regard no language as too strong either to reprobate the wrongs perpetrated on an unoffending people, or to applaud the noble struggles for faith and freedom which that people made. In days like ours, when the faith of many waxes feeble, and laxity of doctrine, combined with a false liberality, would make men tolerant of almost any error, it is well to be reminded of those Italian mountaineers, who held the truth at a higher price than their lives, and who preferred persecution and the Cross with a good conscience to peace and ease with perjured faith.

And here let us understand who the real authors of the Waldensian persecutions were. Ostensibly, and looking on the surface of the page of history, they seem to have been the Dukes of Savoy, their own princes. Implicated in all this guilt and shame the Dukes of Savoy unquestionably were, because these wrongs were committed in violation of repeated and solemn treaties to protect the Waldenses—whose loyalty as subjects had been constant and unimpeached—in the exercise of their faith. But the real authors of these persecutions were the popes and their agents. The crime of the Waldenses was their scriptural religion; and in the eyes of the Roman Church no crime is so unpardonable as to assert independence of her authority. These poor people had probably suffered no harm whatever from the court of Turin, but for the pressure ceaselessly brought to bear on it by the court of Rome. Dr. Gilly illustrates this very forcibly when he says: "Let the reader, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, reflect upon the tendency of the following specimen of the numerous edicts in my possession, and I shall not be accused of doing wrong to the Church of Rome, when I affirm that the lintels of the Vatican are sprinkled with the blood of every Vaudois who died in defence of his religion: 'Charles Emmanuel, by the grace of God, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont, &c. In conformity with the brief published by his Holiness, our Lord Pope Gregory XV., and with our desire to promote the sacred wishes of his Holiness, we command, &c.' Then follows one of those penal enactments which drove unhappy men to desperation, and converted scenes of peace into an arena of frightful conflict." (Gilly, p. 285.)

Interwoven with the harrowing annals of the bloodshed and infernal cruelties endured by the Waldenses, is another and a different story: that of their heroic courage and chivalrous struggle for home and freedom, and for the faith they loved so well. These people took up arms in their own defence. They fought before they fell. And, apart altogether from the sacred cause in which they were engaged, I know nowhere a record more thrilling than this portion of their history. In their Arnauts, and Janavels, and Jahiers, we find heroes as well as martyrs. The defences of Rora and Angrogna, and the Balsille, were marvellous deeds of endurance, and daring, and trust. The long single-barrelled gun of Janavel is still preserved in the library of the little college at La Tour. One of the professors, himself a native Waldensian, had been showing us the ghastly plates

in an old copy of Leger's History of the Persecutions, ghastly from the fearful reality they give to the narrative itself; and it was startling to see how the good man's eye kindled and his cheek flushed when, turning from the book, he snatched up Janavel's now rusty matchlock, and told how the brave fellow with this weapon had picked down ruffian after ruffian rather than suffer his wife and little ones to endure bloody and brutal cruelty. Will any say that Janavel did wrong? Grant that he and his comrades should not have embued their hands in blood,—“oppression maketh a wise man mad.” The Waldenses had no wish for war or bloodshed. They held their lands by right, and had held them from time immemorial; and no stranger could have a right to intrude on their little territory to ravage and to destroy. Armed troops being sent to exterminate them because they would not deny their ancient faith, when they fought, they fought in self-defence alone. If ever, therefore, in the history of the world such a term were applicable, theirs was a Holy War.

In a territory where every spot of ground almost has its famous memory, it is difficult to know which to select for description. During my stay of twelve days in the valleys, I naturally visited very many of these. Let me invite the reader's company first to the Vale of Angrogna.

This valley, or, more properly speaking, this mountain gorge, is a lateral branch of the Valley of Lucerna; and from its mouth near La Tour to the Pra del Tor at its further extremity, is not above six or seven miles in length. Yet in this little defile have been enacted some of the most stirring events in the Waldensian annals. Taken as a whole, moreover, it is the most picturesque, though not the grandest, of the valleys. There the traveller from Scotland will often be reminded of the Trosachs, if we suppose the Trosachs magnified to an Alpine scale. Except at the upper and wilder extremity, the mountains which enclose this Italian glen are wooded to their summits; bold masses of rock rising here and there into splintered peaks from out the foliage. And such foliage! One must be on the southern slope of the Alps to comprehend its beauty. Here are forests of the native chestnut and walnut; and as the winding path carries us beneath their dense and fragrant shade, we see on every hand trees of a size and beauty to adorn the finest baronial park in England. In the lower portion of the valley we have the clear rushing stream by our side, whose banks are here wide enough to admit considerable patches of ground to be tilled on either hand; first, the irrigated meadow, now (in early spring) enamelled with tufts of the white sweet-scented narcissus, resembling at a distance pearls gleaming on green velvet. Above, on the slopes, rise vineyards and little fields of rye, or maize, intersected by mulberry trees for the silkworm; while here and there the humble dwellings of the peasant proprietors, each with its overhanging roof and rude verandahs, rise amid the few acres they both own and cultivate. By-and-by, as the valley narrows, our path begins to rise through the forest, and to wind along the steep mountain side, passing at many points underneath grand overhanging cliffs, in whose crevices, high over-

head, bushes of the dwarf rhododendron, or alpenrose, display their glowing crimson flowers; while from moist nooks within hand's reach, one may gather abundance of the Alpine auricula, and deep blue gentian flowers, familiar in our gardens at home. Each winding turn of the footpath opens up to us a new stretch of the valley, contracting now into a grand defile. In sight of one of those vistas, and standing some two hundred feet above the stream, whose hoarse murmur rises through the woods, let us pause a moment. One cannot imagine a more delightful combination for painter's or poet's eye—this intermingling of wooded mountain, and nestling hamlets, and craggy peaks, and, far beyond, those dazzling snows which rise over the whole into the deep blue sky.

Our guide, a Waldensian peasant, proud of the deeds of his forefathers, ere long stops us at a point, whose interest is of a higher kind than that which mere natural beauty or grandeur can bestow. “This,” said he, “is the site of Champforans.” Yes, it was here that, in 1532, was held the famous Synod of the Waldensian Church, whose impress is felt in these valleys to the present hour. It was to this spot that the Reformer Farel with two friends came from across the Alps, that, as younger brethren, they might greet this ancient branch of the Christian family, and bring the cheering news of a great light now dawning over Europe to men who, in their lonely solitude among the mountains, had kept their own little lamp shining through the weary night of the dark ages.

Approaching the head of the valley, we reached another famous spot. Our path here ran along a narrow ledge cut in the face of a cliff; and between ourselves and the rocks on the opposite bank there was but the breadth of the foaming stream, and no more. This spot is the key of the pass; and here one brave man could repel a score. Our guide leant over the edge of the precipitous cliff, feathered with foliage, and pointing with his finger to a deep black pool where the water boiled and seethed far below,—“That,” said he, “is the Tompie Sachetti,” Sachetti's Pool. And why so called? In 1488, Charles II. of Savoy, at the instigation of Pope Innocent VIII., sent a large body of soldiers to invade this little valley, and put to the sword every man, woman, and child who should refuse to go to mass. The troops were not surprised to find a comparatively easy passage through the lower portions of the valley, for it was ever the custom of the Waldensians, when danger threatened, to withdraw into the more inaccessible fastnesses; and for this purpose, Angrogna offered peculiar advantages, since at its upper extremity the valley spreads out into a wide and singular amphitheatre, surrounded on all sides, save one, by steep and inaccessible mountains. This open space, called the Pra del Tor, which in still earlier times had served another purpose, to which we may afterwards advert, was on this occasion filled by the terrified families of the valley—women, and little ones, and the aged, being gathered together there, while the strong men had gone to defend the pass below. Here, where we now stood, some had planted themselves in ambush, behind the

rocks ; while others on the heights above were ready to hurl down huge stones on the assailants, should they force the pass. In numbers they were very few in comparison with the overwhelming force now heard approaching ; but they were nerved by a determination to defend all they held dear ; their faith was strong in the power of prayer ; and they knew that revered teachers, and aged parents were even then pleading for them on the mountain side. The approaching army is now so near that the jeers and wild insulting tones of the soldiers can be heard, anticipating an easy victory and a full glut of vengeance ; one voice especially is loud above the rest—that of Sachetti, a noted captain, and a man of colossal size, who, like another Goliath, blasphemously defied the armies of the living God. Another moment, and the brave defenders of the pass emerge from their hiding-places, and stand, fronting the intruders. The battle begins. Soldier after soldier, as they attempt to force a passage, is shot down—nor have the brave peasants yet lost an inch of ground. Sachetti, maddened with rage, pours it forth in bold but impotent threats ; neither he nor his men perceiving that behind the Waldenses there advances down the gorge a new power, which neither he nor they anticipated. Driven on by the wind, a dense mist had already blotted from sight the upper portion of the valley, and in a few minutes more had enveloped themselves. So dense the mist, a man may now scarce discern his comrade ! In any unknown mountainous country such an occurrence is fitted to alarm. Each object is confused ; each danger is magnified ; and on slippery rocks like these, the next step may be death. A panic seizes the troops—their boasting is cooled now. The Waldenses, knowing every inch of ground, follow up their advantage, and press forward on the retreating mass—now confused and disorganised, uncertain, too, whether their assailants are a score or a thousand. Vast numbers perished that day. Driven backward on each other within the narrow defile, they fell headlong over the rocks. The infamous Sachetti, among the rest, was struck down by the hand of God, and not of man ; for, slipping his foot on a rocky ledge that overhung the stream, his huge frame lost its balance and was precipitated into the rapid, which carried the mangled corpse into that deep boiling pool, from whence it was with difficulty dragged forth, and which to this hour bears his dishonoured name.

Curiously enough, the very day on which we ascended the Vale of Augrogna, we found the priest of the district (for there are some Papists even in Augrogna) superintending—for lack of other employment, perhaps—a body of workmen who were repairing and widening the path near this very point we have attempted to describe. "Ah !" said our guide, "I don't like to see this at all ; for if we had to defend Augrogna again, the narrower the road the better."

Every visitor to La Tour must be struck by the singular mass of rock which rises behind the little town from the upper slope of a mountain in the Vale of Lucerna, in form somewhat like the "Lion's head" of Arthur's Seat which looks down on Edinburgh. This rock is the Castelluzzo. The sad history of Waldensian massacres causes us to look up to that

rock with the same thrilling interest with which we regard the tower of the old church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris, where hung the bell that summoned to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. These now peaceful valleys have had, once and again, their "St. Bartholomew ;" and from that Castelluzzo it was, that on April 27th, 1655, the signal was given to execute the dreadful orders of Christina, Regent of Savoy, who, acting for her son, Charles Emmanuel II. ; and under her holy father, the Pope, sent an army of 15,000 men into the valleys, to massacre every Protestant they contained ! Think of 15,000 bigoted soldiers, infuriated by passion, let loose on a quiet and defenceless people, hemmed into this narrow mountain territory—let loose with the express command of their sovereign to ravage and to kill—their excesses excused, and even sanctioned, because committed in the service of the Holy Church ! When one even tries to imagine what will happen when these 15,000 wolves are hounded on their prey, we shudder, and exclaim, "God pity his poor sheep, thus penned within their 'ancient fold !'"

But the story itself, as given by Leger, an eye-witness, surpasses all imagination. It would seem as if the fiends of the pit had been let loose—so many and monstrous were the cruelties practised on these poor Waldenses. "Children," says he—and we do not give the most hideous portions of his description—"torn from their mothers' breasts, were seized by the feet and dashed against the rocks or walls, which were covered with their brains, while their tender bodies were cast on the common heaps ; or one soldier, seizing one limb of these innocent creatures, and another taking hold of the other, would tear them asunder, beat their mothers with them, and at last throw them into the fields. The sick and aged, both men and women, were either burnt in their houses, or literally cut in pieces ; or, stripped of their garments, were tied up like a ball, with their heads between their legs, and rolled over rocks. . . . It was then," adds the historian, "that the fugitives, who had been snatched like brands out of the flames, could address God in the words of the 79th Psalm :—

' O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance ;
Thy holy temple have they defiled ;
They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of thy servants have they given
To be meat unto the fowls of the heaven,
The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water . . . ;
And there was none to bury them.'"

In this horrible massacre the malice of Rome had full scope ; but for once her craft was at fault. The enemy had overshot the mark. Such hideous work as this would not hide. Leger, a Waldensian pastor, and, as we have said, himself an eye-witness of these unspeakable atrocities, fled to the friendly Swiss cantons, and with bursting heart and burning words proclaimed his people's wrongs. The news spread like wildfire. Never was a finer illustration of the Scripture truth, that "where one member suffers all the members suffer with it," than Protestant Europe afforded at that memorable epoch. To their everlasting honour, the Swiss cantons first took up the cause of

the remnant of Christ's suffering ones. Great Britain, Holland, Germany, Denmark, even France, raised one loud and united remonstrance, sending special messengers therewith to the Court of Savoy. Oliver Cromwell was then Protector of England. Let his name be ever gratefully remembered and honoured as the Protector of the Waldenses! No sooner did he hear the news than he proclaimed a fast through England and Scotland; and ordered a special collection to be made for the relief of the suffering remnant, now creeping from their hiding-places among the mountains. This subscription yielded the large sum of 30,000*l.*—2,000*l.* of which were given by Oliver himself out of his privy purse; and it will interest my readers to know that while this sum, designed and funded for the Waldenses, was in large part embezzled by Charles II.,—who insolently declared that he would not pay the debts of a usurper—William and Mary made a fresh grant to the Waldenses, in lieu of that which Cromwell raised and Charles spent,—and it is out of this latter fund that at this hour each Waldensian pastor is receiving 770 francs (about 30*l.*) a year, paid him by the British Government to aid his scanty maintenance. Well were it, let us add, if all our State obligations had a history and a destination so honourable!

But Cromwell did more. He despatched to Turin a special envoy in Sir Samuel Morland, who carried a letter to the Duke in Latin—the composition of

Cromwell's great secretary, John Milton—and who was commanded to express in terms of stern remonstrance and unmistakeable warning, the horror and indignation of England's Protector. Besides the Latin letter in which he spoke for his illustrious master, Milton wrote an English sonnet, where he gave his own feelings vent in lines that will only perish with the language:

“ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONTE.

“Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubl'd to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.”

The lips which uttered that concluding prayer, the hand that penned it, have long ago crumbled into dust: let us who are alive give God thanks that the time has at length arrived when Milton's prayer is being marvellously answered; and how much cause for such thanksgiving we have, I hope in next number to show.

D. K. GUTHRIE.

DEW.

“I will be as the dew unto Israel.”—*Hosea* xiv. 5.

SOFTLY it falls on the seed new-sown
Where the soil is hard and dry,
And never a noble plant has grown
In all the years gone by.

Softly it falls on the tender blade,
That has drooped in thirsty pain
All the day on the upland glade
For lack of the early rain.

Softly it falls on the green-eared wheat
That feared it must wither away
In the searching rays of noontide heat
In the sultry summer day.

Softly it falls on the grass new-mown,
And crushed by the mower's foot—
The widowed grass, with flower gone,
And little left but the root.

Softly it falls on the lowliest weed
By the forest wayside found,
As on fragrant flowers that all men heed
In a royal garden-ground.

And not for the seed and plant alone
Does it come each day anew,
But to show to man the love of One
Who saith “I am as the dew.”

But it oft complains, “His love, alas!
Is but partly seen in me;
For if He cares so much for the grass,
Then how much more for thee!”

S. R. POWERS.

THE WALDENSES.

PART III.—THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE WALDENSIAN CHURCH.

THIS subject is twofold; for at the present hour, besides the position of the Waldensian Church within the valleys, she has a position beyond them. I propose, therefore, in this concluding paper, to notice, first, the present condition of the Waldensian Church in the valleys of Piedmont, and thereafter, her position with respect to God's work in Italy.

It may prove almost a misfortune for a man to have had a very famous ancestry, and the same is true of a nation or a church. The Waldenses have had a past so glorious and wonderful, that probably there are persons who, visiting their valleys, have come away disappointed, just because they went there with extravagant anticipations. We lately heard Dr. Revel, the President of the Waldensian College in Florence, tell, with a smile, how in ancient times the Papists fabricated the most childish stories about his forefathers; how, even in Turin, the ignorant multitude were made to believe that the "heretics" up among the mountains were a race of monsters, with hideous mouths and a single eye which glared in the centre of their foreheads. While we smile at this vision of demons, we must beware of picturing the modern Waldenses to ourselves as something akin to angels. We must not expect to find among the Waldenses, or anywhere else, universal piety, quenchless zeal, spotless purity; and we tell it to the honour of the pastors there, that more than once we have heard them lament that these graces are not more manifest among their people. It is true also, and the Waldenses have no wish to hide it, that their Church during her long and eventful history has passed through not only external but internal vicissitudes. Her light has not always burned with a pure and steady lustre, and the times when it shone brightest were not those of comparative quiet, but when the blasts of persecution blew the fiercest. There was a period towards the end of the last century, and in the earlier portion of the present, when the zeal of the Waldensian Church seemed to cool, and her faith itself to waver: the rationalism of Germany and Switzerland had been imbibed by at least some of the younger pastors, who in these days had to cross the Alps to study theology. In God's mercy that influence was not of long duration. Even at the worst their ancient standards remained sound and scriptural bulwarks of truth, and ere long evangelical professors in Geneva and Lausanne were raised up, and their influence manifested itself in a return to the old faith. A quickening commenced throughout the whole Church in the valleys, and some earnest Christians from England were greatly honoured about forty years ago in strengthening her reviving energies. Since that date, we rejoice to assure our readers that the Waldensian Church has continued steadily to progress, and each new year to develop new fruits in evidence of her internal vitality; so that the stranger who visits the valleys to-day with the simple desire to see

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the Waldenses as they are, will come away as we did with feelings of deepened affection and respect.

The writer had the privilege, along with deputies from four different Churches in England and Scotland, to be present at the meeting of the Waldensian Synod of 1865. The whole proceedings of that simple but solemn assembly, made up of seventy-two pastors and laymen, indicated a Church whose machinery, organisation, and discipline are in sound working order. I have since received from Italy the official report of that Synod, and one has but to glance over the subjects of each successive day's deliberations, to find abundant evidence that, in her care to inquire into the inner life of the different congregations, and in her sense of duty towards God's work throughout the world, this ancient Church of the Alps is still, as of old, a living one. The Waldensian Church is Presbyterian in form of government, and each pastor has a body of ruling elders, called *anciens*, associated with him in the care of his flock. The Synod or chief court of the Church meets annually for the transaction of the Church's business under the presidency of a moderator, whose term of office is one year. Five members, the moderator being one, are chosen at the Synod to form the *Table*, or executive body, which by the constitution of the Church manages all her affairs during the year, internal and external alike. In a former article I referred to the time-honoured writings which are of authority among the Waldenses, especially the "Noble Lesson," dating from the 12th century. Among her more recent standards, copies of which we procured in the valleys, are the Confession of Faith, compiled in 1655; the Catechism, which has recently been adopted in place of Osterwald's; and the Liturgy; (for, Presbyterian as the Waldensian Church is, her public services are more or less regulated by a book of Common Prayer)—all these are eminently clear in statement and scriptural in substance.

It would be easy to give statistics regarding the actual condition of the Church as it exists at this hour in the valleys; but I believe it will be as instructive, and probably more interesting, to my reader, if I attempt to sketch the state of things as we found them in one of the upper parishes. The fifteen parishes are classed into upper and lower, according as their situation lies nearer or farther from the higher Alps. In the lower parishes—for instance La Tour—one finds a considerable admixture of an extraneous and modern element among the people; and, being desirous to see the native Waldenses in, as far as possible, their primitive state, we were led to visit the parish of Massel in the upper extremity of the Val San Martino, where we spent part of three days, one being a Sunday. As the event proved, we were most wisely directed to Massel. Never can we forget our sojourn in that wild and solitary nook of the Alps, nor the abounding kindness received under the roof of its devoted young pastor, Philip Cardon, and his

genial wife. Living faith, intelligence, and refinement are beautiful in combination anywhere. We found all three in that simple dwelling amid the wilds of Massel, and there, the combination seemed to have a peculiar charm.

The upper portions of the valley of St. Martin are not only beautiful but grand—almost sublime. We had left the vine and mulberry far beneath, and even the walnut and chesnut began here to give place to the shaggy pines which showed themselves high up on the mountain's side, dark-green among the snows. The shadows of evening were around us as we approached the hamlet of poor little wooden cabins called Massel, 5000 feet above the sea-level; and as our path at certain points was but a ledge on the side of almost perpendicular cliffs, it was a matter of some anxiety to traverse it; two of our party, of whom one was a lady, being obliged to employ mules, and a single false step here might have hurled both beast and rider into the foaming Germanasca far below. When Massel came in sight, though the sun had quite left the valley itself, it still tinged with crimson the snowy peaks above the village: and never did a loving welcome and repose seem more grateful than that night. Next day was the Sabbath, and no words can describe the striking character of the scene as we went forth in the early morning from M. Cardon's house, which stands high up on the mountain side. The whole valley seemed pervaded with a sabbatic stillness, which the murmur of the stream below seemed but to make the more profound. The air was deliciously fresh and pure, the foliage in its tender green of early spring; and on either side, the mighty mountains opened up into solemn ravines, at whose extremities sharp peaks of glittering snow and naked rock rose into the blue sky, from which the morning sun was pouring down a flood of light on the whole scene.

"It seemed as Nature's self would raise
A temple to her Maker's praise."

And what a welcome contrast this Sabbath morning among the Alps, to the dust, and din, and roar of carriages on a continental Sunday in Naples or in Paris!

The church, or *temple*—a plain unadorned building—stands on the opposite side of the valley, amid a few unlettered grave-stones, where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." From many directions around we saw the people gathering to service in little groups, and on entering the church at ten o'clock we found it filled. The congregation must have numbered 500 at least. The men enter by one door, the women by another, and sit on different sides of the building, according to the ancient, but, as we thought, unreasonable custom of the Waldenses in their worship. The whole aspect of the congregation was grave and thoughtful, the attire of both sexes very homely but clean, the women, younger as well as older, wearing a kind of cap. Bonnets we saw none. The men generally shave the upper lip, and many are by no means dark in complexion. In fact, one looking round the audience might almost have believed he saw a congregation in the Scottish Highlands, or North Wales. The wall opposite the pulpit bore, tastefully painted in colours on the plaster, the

ancient and most appropriate device and motto of the Waldensian Church—a candle burning in a candlestick, and around it seven stars, with this motto underneath, "*Lux lucet in tenebris*"—"The light shineth in the darkness."

When we entered, a ruddy flaxen-haired boy was reading aloud a portion of Scripture from a large Bible placed on a table below the pulpit, following it by Osterwald's commentary on the passage. We learned that this youth was that day a substitute for the *regent* or schoolmaster of the parish, whose office it is, in all Waldensian churches, to read the Word of God during the assembling of the congregation. When the pastor ascended the pulpit, he commenced the service by reading the Ten Commandments, which he followed by offering the Confession of Sin contained in the Liturgy. During the reading of the Law and at all the prayers the people stood, while during singing they kept their seats. The book board of the pulpits is to one side, not in front; consequently, perhaps, one never hears a read sermon in a Waldensian *temple*. The congregation sing very slowly, and the tunes seemed chiefly in a minor key; the effect produced reminding us strongly of the Gaelic psalmody in the Scotch Highlands. The morning service over, we were present at a very interesting meeting of the children, who were catechised and instructed in an admirable manner by their pastor.

In the evening we learned much from M. Cardon about the trials and the encouragements of a Waldensian pastor's life. It is the custom to appoint the younger clergy, in the first instance, to the higher parishes, such as his; and when they have borne the laborious fatigues which these entail for a certain number of years, they are then transferred to an easier sphere. The long distances to be travelled on foot, the well-nigh inaccessible paths, the weary winter of seven months, and the deep poverty of almost the whole people, all combine to make a mountain parish in the valleys a trying field of labour. On our way to the Balsille next morning, our friend pointed out to us a spot where, in the former winter, he had well-nigh lost his life, when on a call of duty, by slipping his foot on the treacherous ice of the narrow foot-path. In an instant he was carried over a steep ledge of rock which overhung the torrent below; and had he not providentially been rescued by two of his flock who accompanied him, he had never reached home alive. We could realise his danger all the better when, on returning to his house, he showed us the framework of iron beset with spikes more than an inch long, which, on his winter journeys, he fastens to the sole of his boots, as we do skates, not however to help, but retard his progress. This young minister has had the satisfaction of seeing an end put to some forms of Sabbath desecration which existed formerly in his parish, such as merry-makings on the evenings of the Lord's Day, to which he boldly went, accompanied by the elder of the district, unbidden and unexpected, administering then and there a solemn and well-timed rebuke; and his faithfulness has been blessed and successful. Further, he has had the satisfaction of seeing a growing desire among his flock, within a recent period, for meetings of a different

and much better kind—gatherings in private houses for social prayer. If the Waldensian pastor's work be severe, his worldly recompense is very small. Some few of the pastors are not wholly dependent on their scanty incomes, but most of them are so; and Christians in this land of ours who can spend 20*l.* on a single occasion of sumptuous hospitality, should know that this sum is exactly one-third of the whole income (including house and garden) which these Alpine pastors have for themselves and family. They are "passing rich on sixty pounds a year." It may not be wrong to spend 20*l.* on a dinner-party; but surely those who do so, should have something to spare for the Waldensian missions in Italy!

And this reminds me to say a word or two concerning the poverty of the Waldenses as a people. God has recently called them to go forth on a great work in their own land, as we shall see: they are willing to give the agents and the labour in that work, but their poverty absolutely precludes them from supporting these agents; this is what we are asked to help them to do. One has but to see the little patches of land from which a family derives its whole subsistence, to learn how poor the generality of them must be. We do not say this to excuse the want of tidiness and cleanliness too apparent in their dwellings; but it quite explains the scanty furniture, and unhealthy colour in many of the children, which it pains one to observe. In the mountain districts we generally found the cottage windows unglazed; but the square sheets of paper which supply the place of glass, and which seemed invariably written leaves of children's "copy-books," give curious evidence that if the Waldenses are poor, they prize and obtain education for their little ones. Wishing to see a truly primitive Waldensian home, the pastor of Massel introduced us to one—a sample of others around—which was nestled at the foot of the historic rock called Balsille, at the head of the Vallée St. Martin. We had to enter this rude wooden cabin by an outside stair—or ladder, rather—at the head of which a low door ushered us into a dark and narrow passage, emerging from which, we found ourselves in a room low-roofed, and dimly lighted by one small window. Here, and in a small closet beyond, the family have their summer quarters; but in winter, from want of fuel, which they cannot afford time to cut, the whole household migrate (and it is the same with half the families in this mountain parish) where?—to the byre or cow-house below; and there, while the snow for six or seven weary months lies several feet deep around, these poor people live and sleep beside their cattle for the sake of the warmth which the brutes give forth. To verify this, we entered the cow-house at the foot of the stair outside, and saw the rude bedsteads arranged somewhat as berths are in a ship. The sight was sad enough. Yet these people were God-fearing and intelligent; and in their welcome to their young pastor, as he entered their poor mountain cabin, and his kindly words to them, we were reminded of the intercourse between Felix Neff or Oberlin and their flocks. I should not forget to mention one circumstance peculiarly significant. Amid all the mean-

ness of the abode, we observed in a corner of the little room upstairs, a few shelves, and on these shelves no less than thirty books—larger or smaller—for we had the curiosity to count them; and what was our surprise to find among them, translated by a French Evangelical Society, one or two tracts by Mr. Ryle, and at least one of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons! Here, in a poor hut in a wild gorge of Northern Italy, to find these English worthies was indeed a pleasant surprise. But we were among the Waldenses; and it is as true of them now as of old, "*Lux lucet in tenebris*"—"The light shineth in the darkness."

In Naples, with 500,000 inhabitants, not one person in ten can read; but Naples is a Popish city, and Popery never was partial to educating the masses. In the Waldensian valleys, on the contrary, we found schools everywhere. Will it be believed that in this little territory, some twenty miles long by eighteen broad, while there is a college at La Tour, a Latin grammar-school at Pomaret, and fifteen principal schools, one to each parish, there are upwards of one hundred schools, throughout the district, if one includes the smaller side schools, open some three or four or five months in winter, one in each *quartier* of each parish!

In former papers in this Magazine (see SUNDAY MAGAZINE for 1865, pp. 7 and 852) accounts have been given of the educational establishment at La Tour, and of the great services of Dr. Gilly and General Beckwith in connection with these and other Waldensian operations. On these, therefore, we will not enlarge, but proceed to notice our second subject:—The present position of the Waldensian Church with respect to Italy.

The present most hopeful position of the Waldenses has been attained, under Providence, as a result of the great political changes of 1848 and 1859-61. In 1848, Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, granted a free constitution to his subjects: and it was on February 17th of that same year that he passed an ever-memorable decree, emancipating the Waldenses from all civil and political disabilities, and securing to them the free exercise of their worship throughout his kingdom. It was a kingdom of four millions then: it numbers twenty-two millions to-day. Charles Albert was the only Italian sovereign who, in his constitution of 1848, inserted a clause securing *religious liberty* to his subjects; and while God has removed the Italian despots from their places, the son of Charles Albert not merely retains the throne of his sires, but wears the crown of United Italy: so that now the Waldenses, as subjects of Victor-Emmanuel, and by his father's act secured in full liberty of worship, may go forth with an open Bible among the twenty-two millions of their fellow-countrymen, and preach the very faith for which their fathers had to die.

Have they taken that work in hand? What response are they giving to the call of God's Providence? How are they employing their marvellous opportunity? The following table furnishes the reply; and if my reader take the trouble to glance at a map of Italy, he will see the extent of the ground occupied

from the position of these stations. At each of them the Waldensian Church has one or more agents, whose number and special work is indicated below :—

Stations.	Ministers.	Lay Evangelists.	Schoolmasters and School- mistresses.
Palermo	1	0	1
Naples	1	2	3
Elba	1	0	1
Leghorn	1	0	2
Pisa	1	0	1
Lucca	1	0	0
Florence	4	0	3
Perugia	0	1	0
Favale	0	0	1
Genoa	1	0	3
San Pietro d'Arena	0	1	1
La Pietra Bassignana	1	1	1
Pinerolo	1	0	1
Turin	2	0	4
Ivrea	0	1	1
Aosta	1	0	1
Courmayeur	0	1	0
Milan	1	0	1
Pavia	0	1	0
Como and Intelvi	1	0	1
Guastralla	0	1	1
Brescia	1	0	0
Nice	1	0	0
	20	9	27

Be it borne in mind that it is but eighteen years since the Waldensian Church found access to any of these stations; and in respect to the larger number, five years only: yet, wherever she now has an ordained labourer, there is gathered a congregation varying from some forty souls up to four hundred—in some cases the communicants number nearly two hundred, of whom the majority have come out from the Church of Rome.

Where, I ask, on the face of the earth, have we an illustration of Divine Providence more remarkable than the past history and present position of the Waldenses present? Now, at length, we discern God's intention in hiding them so long among their mountain recesses; in preserving the truth there during the long night of the dark ages, and through the centuries of persecution which followed. He had a work for this people to do in Italy.

When on a bright Sunday morning last May, we approached the spacious building which raises its ornate pinnacles in front of the Corso del Re at Turin, we scarce believed it could be the *Chiesa Valdese*; or Waldensian church, till we saw over the open porch this inscription, carved in large Italian characters: "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." The date of this building is 1853. The service in the morning was French, in the afternoon, Italian. A large congregation of many hundred persons filled the building on both occasions. M. Meille, the pastor, a native of the valleys, is a deeply pious man,—tall, dark, and striking in aspect. He would in any country, and in any language, be esteemed a great preacher; and apart altogether from the Waldensian population, and the converts from Popery, his presence in Turin is most important; one proof of which I cannot forbear to mention. A very interesting institution, called

"*Artigianelli Valdesi*," exists in that city. It is in fact a home for sixteen poor, friendless Waldensian boys, who are there brought under kind and Christian influence, saved from ruin, and taught a trade—hence the name. To enlarge this institution, a sum of 31,244 francs (about 1250*l.* sterling), was last year placed in M. Meille's hands by one of his congregation, as a thank-offering for spiritual good received under his ministry. The donor was Baron S—, the Russian Ambassador, who, while the Italian court resided at Turin, joined each Lord's Day in the simple worship of the Waldenses.

Returning in the afternoon to the Italian service, conducted by the younger M. Meille, we found a most interesting audience, many of them recent converts from Popery; and besides the congregation, who were seated, there was a curious peripatetic assemblage of men, women and children, who entered the porch from the open street, attracted by curiosity, and kept coming and going during the whole time of the service. To a stranger it seemed an annoying interruption, but the preacher and the regular congregation were evidently quite accustomed to it. We learned afterwards that these comers and goers are all Roman Catholics. Some stay but a few minutes; others longer; while others, arrested and interested, remain to the conclusion of the service, and not a few who are now members in the communion of the Church were thus first gathered in. The singing was inexpressibly touching. Something, no doubt, might be due to the associations of the scene; but as the swell of those rich Italian voices, which almost drowned the organ, rose in the hymn, "*Di pace al principe*," the effect was thrilling. One felt within that church that the Psalmist's words might have been penned expressly for these Waldenses: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." How wonderful, that, in the very city from whence, two centuries ago, the Propaganda sent forth an edict to exterminate every Waldensian by fire and sword we should hear the Gospel preached in Italian by a Waldensian! Looking round the audience we saw some soldiers in uniform; soldiers of Piedmont here met peacefully to worship God; and remembering the old persecutions, Isaiah's prophecy came to mind: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb."

In other papers in this Magazine mention has been made of the little college at La Tour. The new sphere which God's Providence lately called the Waldensian Church to occupy suggested at once the desirableness of transferring the theological department of the college from the valleys to a more central position in Italy. A long-tryed friend of the Waldenses, Dr. Stewart, of the Scotch Church at Leghorn, deeply impressed with this necessity, appealed to one or two friends in Britain and America for help to secure a large building which in 1861 was vacant in Florence. The needed 5000*l.* was at once put into his hands, and the Palazzo Salviati secured. It was with no little interest that we visited this building. Half-an-hour previously we had been looking up to the barred window of the prison where, a few years ago, Francesco and Rosa Madiai

had been confined for reading the Word of God—and here, in the same city, and in what had formerly been the palace of a Cardinal, we heard the Word of God publicly expounded to a class of fourteen youths who were to go over the length and breadth of Italy as ministers of the Gospel. Stranger still—the very man to whom they were listening, Professor Geymonat, had been in 1854 himself imprisoned in Florence like the Madiai. In the lower story of this old palazzo we visited the Italian schools of the Waldensian Church, where the New Testament is daily read and taught: here, too, is a printing office—the Claudian Press—where we found eight or nine workmen busily printing the Word of God, the Pilgrim's Progress, Catechisms, and exposures of Popery, all in Italian. These publications are issued unceasingly, and sold at the depots of evangelical books, which are established in Leghorn, Genoa, Milan, Naples, &c., as well as by colporteurs throughout the Italian kingdom. As we emerged from this busy scene into the sunny cortile, or open inner court which one invariably finds in Italian palazzos, it was significant indeed to observe, looking down on us from one of the lofty windows, not the portly form and scarlet cape of old Cardinal Salviati, but the beaming face of Dr. Revel, a descendant of the martyred Valdesi, now President of the College here.

There is much more to tell, but we must draw these sketches to a close. Our aim throughout has been, not merely to enlist the interest of our readers in the marvellous story of the Waldenses, but to press on their attention the special reason why at the present hour we should remember them in our prayers, and afford them the material help they need for the new work which God has given them to do. From the snowy Alps to its most southern extremity, Italy (excluding Venetia and Rome) is now open to the truth. Not indeed that the people are all ready to welcome it. Alas! no. There is everywhere among the masses a woful amount of ignorance, which the priests turn to account by prejudicing them against Evangelical teaching, (witness the recent outrage at Barletta, where the mob, hounded on by the priests, massacred nine persons connected with the Evangelist's meeting :) and sadder than the blind ignorance of the masses, and harder to deal with, is the immorality, the indifference to all religion, and open infidelity of the educated and the refined.

Nevertheless, Italy is at this moment as it never was before opened to the circulation and preaching of God's holy Word. Side by side with that great fact mark this other:—In a remote northern corner of that land God has for long centuries marvellously preserved a community of men who have held a pure faith amid fearful trials, and who constitute at this hour a Christian Church, small indeed and poor, but thoroughly organised and in full working order. These Waldenses have proved their willingness to come forth from their seclusion, now that God has opened the way, and to take their share in the glorious work of Italy's evangelisation. Already they have fifty-six agents in the field. They are willing to give life and labour; they can give no more. They are very far from putting themselves forward as the only

agents suitable for this great enterprise: they welcome other Christian agencies, and feel that all are too few. But this they do claim,—a pre-eminent fitness for the work: and it is the truth and justice of this claim which we anxiously press on our readers. The Waldenses are Italians by birth, and by civil rights and privileges. They are Italians, who, in Italy, since the days of the Primitive Church, have opposed the tyranny of Rome, and resisted it even unto blood. They possess standards eminently scriptural. They constitute no undefined religious society, but an organised Church; and we maintain, that if all this be borne in mind, it were to ignore the clearest indications of God's Providence not to give them the chief place in our sympathies, and the chief share of our contributions for the evangelisation of long-benighted Italy.

A special appeal is at this moment made by the Waldensian Church to British Christians. To continue even her present amount of Evangelistic work in Italy, an annual sum of 4000*l.* is needed from this country. If we refuse it, some of her stations must be closed. Silver and gold the Waldenses have little of; but what they have—the men and the work—they give freely. Surely this is an occasion when the Apostolic injunction will touch the consciences and open the hands of many amongst us: “Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

In the following passage, not more striking than true, Mr. Ruskin addresses a class of persons becoming each season more numerous; and as bearing on my present subject—the duty we owe to Christian brethren on the Continent—I venture to append it here:—

“There has now (1857) been peace between England and the Continental powers about thirty-five years, and during that period the English have visited the Continent at the rate of many thousands a year, staying there, I suppose, on the average, each two or three months; nor these an inferior kind of English, but the kind which ought to be the best—the noblest born, the best taught, the richest in time and money, having more leisure, knowledge, and power, than any other portion of the nation. These, we might suppose, beholding, as they travelled, the condition of the States in which the Papal religion is professed, and being, at the same time, the most enlightened section of a great Protestant nation, would have been animated with some desire to dissipate the Romanist errors, and to communicate to others the better knowledge which they possessed themselves. I doubt not but that He who gave peace upon the earth, and gave it by the hand of England, expected this much of her, and has watched every one of the millions of her travellers as they crossed the sea, and kept count for him of his travelling expenses, and of their distribution, in a manner of which neither the traveller nor his courier were at all informed. I doubt not, I say, but that such accounts have been literally kept for all of us, and that a day will come when they will be made clearly legible to us, and when we shall see added together, on one side of the account-book, a great sum, the certain portion, whatever it may be, of this thirty-five years' spendings of the rich English, accounted for in this manner:—

“ . . . To shell cameos and bits of mosaic bought at Rome, so much ; to coral horns and lava brooches bought at Naples, so much ; to glass beads at Venice, and gold filagree at Genoa, so much ; to pictures, and statues, and ornaments, everywhere, so much ; to avant-couriers and extra post-horses, for show and magnificence, so much ; to great entertainments and

good places for seeing sights, so much. This, I say, will be the sum on one side of the book ; and on the other will be written—

“ To the struggling Protestant Churches of France, Switzerland, and PIEDMONT, so much.

“ Had we not better do this piece of statistics for ourselves, in time ? ” D. K. GUTHRIE.

A FEAST OF ISRAEL.

It must have been a very beautiful sight to witness the tribes of Israel going up to “ the sanctuary ” to worship the Lord of Hosts on the Feast of the Passover. As this first and greatest of the three festivals of the Law fell to be held in spring, nature and religion united to cheer the heart of the people, and to tune it, like a sacred harp, for the celebration of the praise of Jehovah. So early as in February (*Adar*), the Levites sped through the country in all directions, preparing the way for the expected travellers. The roads and bridges were inspected, the wells and tanks were cleaned and repaired, and the adjacent fields carefully examined, lest the feelings of the pious might be offended by the sight of anything unlawful. The graves were fenced in or whitened, so as to be conspicuous at a distance, lest any of the Lord’s guests should be defiled by touching them unawares. For it was emphatically enjoined in the Law that no unclean person should eat of the paschal lamb. Should any one unfortunately be in that state, an opportunity was given him to eat it the next month, which was called the Lesser Passover. This, however, was regarded as a poor compensation for the loss of those enjoyments which the Great Passover alone could furnish. To go up to Jerusalem with the families of the house of Jacob ; to walk with beloved friends across the hills and valleys of Judah, now blooming with the fresh life of spring ; to see the Holy City clad in its most beautiful attire, and peopled at this time with thousands and hundreds of thousands of the tribes of Israel ; to witness the worship of the Lord in its highest splendour ; to hear the songs and rapturous responses of the priests and the Levites, and the *hallel*s of the innumerable multitude ; to enjoy the merry din and bustle of so many cheerful guests, young and old, rich and poor, from far and near,—all this was too grand and too impressive not to be looked forward to throughout the year as one of the greatest blessings and privileges which a son of Abraham could enjoy while he was in the land of the living.

The Passover, which lasted seven days, commenced on the 15th of Nisan, and ended on the 21st, but the 14th used to be included in the number of the sacred days, since on the close of that day the paschal lamb was to be killed. In Egypt, where the feast was celebrated for the first time, the lamb was chosen from the flock as early as the 10th of the month. This custom, it seems, obtained in Palestine as long as the people continued to kill the lamb in their own houses, according to the original precept in Exodus xii. This precept, however, was modified

by a later commandment in Deut. xvi. 5, 6. The people were instructed by it that, after they had taken possession of the promised land, they should not “ sacrifice the passover within any of their gates, but at the place which the Lord should choose to place his name in.” But this modification, it would appear, was not carried into practice even after the Temple was built, and the worship of the Lord centred there. The people continued to kill and eat the sacrifice in their own houses on the evening of the 14th, and to go up to Jerusalem on the 15th to celebrate the Passover on the ensuing days, “ the days of the unleavened bread.” It was, most likely, owing to this disregard of the Law that the influence of the Passover gradually declined during the reign of the kings of Judah. Not until Hezekiah’s attention was drawn to this neglect was a reform commenced (2 Chron. xxx.). We are informed that this reform met with considerable opposition from many who were loth to abandon the old habit. The posts, whom the king had sent from city to city, “ they laughed to scorn, and mocked.” It was his great and pious grandson Josiah who succeeded in carrying out the reform in its full extent. He restored the Passover, “ so that it was done in such a sort as it was written.” The people no more killed the paschal lambs within their own gates, but brought them to Jerusalem, and killed them there. From those days, too, the lawyers and pharisees took charge of the organisation of that great solemnity. They drew up a set of rules and regulations, describing in the minutest detail every thing to be observed, not only during the days of the festival, but for a considerable time before, in order to secure perfect observance, according to the Law. It was required by this code that the Passover should be held every year in Israel, and it was so as long as there was a Temple in Jerusalem. We find those regulations fully recorded in the Talmud. It is strange that though the Jews held stubbornly to the old habit of killing the paschal lamb in their houses before the Temple was built, they are now very averse to that habit, and have been ever since the Temple was destroyed. The Jews in the present day observe “ the feast of the unleavened bread,” but keep no true Passover, no lamb being killed. This is all the more remarkable, in that the paschal lamb is the only sacrifice they could have safely continued, since according to its original institution it could be offered by every master of a family without the aid of a priest and without an altar. But just as God once caused Caiaphas to prophesy what he did not mean, and as He caused Pilate to write what he did