

Correspondence.

OUR SPECIAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT.

EGYPTIAN DARKNESS IN ITALY.

FLORENCE, July 7, 1867.

DEAR EDITOR: As I travel through this beautiful country, I can but wonder why it is sunk in such heathenish darkness, and whether the day of its deliverance is soon to dawn. I have been looking around for the evidences of the approach of the dawn, which I had hoped were abundant and everywhere apparent; but the prospect is much like that in India—a good work doing, but the field so large and so dark that I am compelled to say of the workmen: "What are these among so many?"

The gross idolatry of these bigoted papists is forced upon the mind inevitably. The other day in Rome the Pope held his daily levees, at which the faithful who were strangers, were the principal guests. They took with them strings of beads—rosaries—which he blessed for them, and they then reverenced them as relics to be retained all their lives, insuring them health and prosperity as long as they might live. The priests brought with them to Rome medals by the gross, which he blessed, and they take them back to their people as sacred. We saw one priest at the station after crossing Mount Cenis, who had about a half peck of them, on which the custom-house officer wanted to make him pay duty. Every priest had a bundle of them. There are tents of thousands who have kissed the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus, in St. Peter's, supposing it to be the statue of St. Peter. What idolaters! Our Italian guide, a bright, intelligent specimen of young Italy, laughed at the superstition; said he had kissed it when a boy, but was too wise to kiss Jupiter's foot now.

In all the splendid churches, we saw very little of the Saviour and His sufferings portrayed, and very much of the Virgin and the miracles and martyrdoms of the saints. It is very difficult to find any picture or image of Christ in all St. Peter's, among the hundreds of statues and paintings.

In St. Peter in Vincolo, one of the 370 churches of Rome, we were shown the chains which bound St. Peter when he came to Rome. They are kept all the year in a strong safe in the wall, but brought out on the anniversary of his death, June 29th. The priest who showed them to us kissed them very reverently. They pretend to have parts of the bodies of the apostles under the altars in their churches, and worship them with the greatest reverence. In St. Peter's they say they have the body of Peter under the high altar. Fifty lamps are burned around it day and night during the festivities, and many of the visitors were kneeling down to pray around it all this time.

At a church near the Capitol they have a little wax baby they call the *Babino*. It is all dressed up in finery and flowers, and represents the infant Saviour. They kneel down to it, worship it, and if any one is sick they carry them to it; as a look at it, they think, will make them well.

The most atrocious idolatry, perhaps, is that towards the *Pope himself*. To kiss his hand, or press it, is not enough. He rode out to the Villa Borghese, the other day, and alighted to walk. Instantly a crowd ran towards him. Ladies, handsomely dressed, threw themselves prostrate in the road before him, and kissed his feet. The dirty road was no hindrance to their idolatry. Men prostrated themselves, also, though the Americans present merely raised their hats and bowed.

Is not all this vile idolatry?—to say nothing of the pictures of the Virgin at almost every corner of the streets, and in most of the shops and stores, with a lamp burning before them all night, and often all day, too.

THE WALDENSES.

I have endeavored to ascertain what is doing to spread light in all this darkness. The most powerful and regularly organized work I find to be that of the Vaudois or Waldensian Church, which is endeavoring to spread its light from the northwest corner of Italy, its home for 1500 years, down through all the land. The valleys of Piedmont lie in the extreme northwest of Italy, between the Gulf of Genoa and the Alps. Its valleys and mountain-sides have been the home of Protestantism and the scene of persecution for many hundreds of years. Just as soon as Italy became open to the Gospel, after the revolution of 1848, these Waldenses began to look over their native land to see what they could do to redeem it from popery. They have continued ever since, with firm and slowly advancing tread, until now they have stationed in every town of importance, outside of the little area of the Pope's Roman States, an evangelist, who has generally a church and Sabbath-school established, and always the school if not the church. In some other places they have a colporteur stationed, who visits the country around, selling and giving away Bibles, Testaments, and good books. In this city, Florence, they have a college established, with four able professors. Rev. Dr. Revel is at the head; twelve or fifteen theological students are preparing directly to be missionaries to these benighted Italians, and there are 150 scholars in the day schools, who have religious instruction daily—besides 150 children in their Sabbath-schools. The children are all Italians, of papist parentage,

who are sent more for the opportunity of learning reading, and the higher branches, than to be taught Bible truths; but the teachers are careful to instruct them in the Bible daily, as well as in arithmetic and grammar.

Rev. Dr. Revel, as I have said, is at the head of the college. He is a native Waldensian, a man of excellent education, of liberal views, and a man alive to all the interests of Italy, political and religious. Many of us saw him when he visited America, eight years ago. He is also at the head of the general-Waldensian missionary enterprise for Italy, corresponding with the evangelists in all the towns, and travelling among them occasionally. The college building is owned by the Vaudois Society, and is ample for college and schools, and contains a chapel which accommodates about 400. I saw it crowded full on a week day evening, to hear

GAVAZZI,

who speaks to these Italians in their own tongue, and most fluently. They crowd to hear him wherever announced. He tells them in plain terms how priest-ridden they are, and denounces the papacy fearlessly. He travels constantly among the Italian cities, and does an immense work of demolition. In Venice the crowds were so great last spring that four places were opened each night in the week in different parts of the city, to accommodate those who were desirous of hearing of Protestantism. That city of the sea, so lately rescued from under the iron heel of Austrian popery, is waking up. His preaching prepares the way for the more solid and important work of the instruction of the evangelists—and they are already at work in Venice.

LIBERAL PRIESTS.—DR. DE SANCTIS.

We have heard something in America about large numbers of priests being converted—8000 of them in Naples alone, &c. Those in Naples merely joined in a strong petition to the Italian government against the temporal power of the Pope, hoping that their own personal livings would be increased, if the Pope were to draw away less of their incomes. It was a temporary political conversion, nothing more. They have not been successful, and are quietly pursuing their former ways again. Some few priests do become converted to Protestantism; but are generally so debased by their former lives and education, that they do not rise to the idea of the conversion of the heart to God. They hate Rome, but do not truly love God. About one in ten of them does rise to a true conversion; but thus far these Protestant priests, unconverted, have not proved of much value in regenerating Italy. They have been made use of in some instances as teachers of the young in day-schools, under the supervision of the evangelists; but their former debased lives have rendered them unfit to be trusted with the young. The few who become really converted in heart and life, make the most valuable agents in the religious work.

We heard one of them, Dr. De Sanctis, preach in the Vaudois chapel to an intelligent audience of Italians. We also heard the congregation sing their Vaudois tunes, and as the old-time choral measures filled the chapel, we thought of days of persecution, when those very tunes rang through some of their secluded valleys, as they worshipped God, fearing and trembling lest the echoes of their choral should be heard by others beside themselves and their God.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

A good, wholesome leaven is thus slowly permeating Italy, through the agency of the Vaudois. The money support comes mainly from England and Scotland, as the Vaudois themselves are poor in pocket though rich in heart, and they say to give them the money and they will supply the men, educated, armed and equipped for the work; Italian men as they all are, born on the soil, speaking the language, and having in a large degree the full confidence of the Italian people.

If I remember correctly, 20,000 copies of the New Testament or the Bible were distributed by evangelists and colporteurs last year, most of them sold at a very low price—and some \$30,000 in gold were spent in carrying on the evangelistic work. We in America could, at once, double this work, by waking up to its importance and assisting these Vaudois in their noble mission.

Dr. Clark is working in Milan, independent of the Vaudois, but as he was absent from home when I was there, I was unable to learn anything of his work.

What a glorious opportunity for our Presbyterian Church, to take hold with these Presbyterian Vaudois and lay broad and deep foundations for setting the Churches of unregenerate Italy upon a sure foundation for the time to come. They love our form of worship and government more than any other;—let us help them.

FLORENCE.

The Arno divides Florence into two parts. The hotels and stores are on the north side; Victor Emanuel's Palace (the Pitti) and many residences on the south. The Waldensian College is a fine building, on the south side, on a good street, the same on which Hiram Powers' studio is located. The American chapel is also on the south side, as well as that of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, in both of which we worshipped, and of which we will have more to say hereafter.

Last Sabbath we saw a most gorgeous sunset in Florence;—golden clouds down the Arno, Italy's bright blue above, but over the hills, around the city to the east, deep, black storm-

clouds, against which rested a rainbow of heavenly beauty. The green hills, white castles and towers, black clouds, rainbow and sunset clouds, made a picture never to be forgotten.

G. W. M.

LETTER FROM REV. HENRY H. JESSUP.

SELF-SUPPORT OF PROTESTANT EDUCATION IN SYRIA.

BEIRUT, SYRIA, June 21, 1867.

I have just returned from the Annual Examination of the Beirut Native Protestant Female Seminary in the chapel of the American Mission. This school numbers eighty girls, representing five of the different religious sects of Syria; the greater part of the girls being boarders. The Examination continued four days, in the English and French languages, Arabic Grammar, Geography and Arithmetic, Anatomy and Physiology, Bible History and the Westminster Assembly's Catechism.

This Institution was the first school in Syria established on the paying principle, and with exclusively native teachers. It commenced with six pupils, and now has eighty. The annual income for the first year was about twenty pounds sterling. This year the income from paying pupils is about £370 (three hundred and seventy pounds).

The American Mission was established in Syria in 1820, and it is high time that the native Protestants began to assume the support of their own institutions. No foreign Missionary Society will or should continue to supply Protestant Christian communities in foreign lands with education and teaching, after they are able to furnish it and pay for it themselves. The American Mission after furnishing education male, and female, gratuitously for many years, has become satisfied that the native Protestant community in Beirut is able to carry on the education of its own daughters, and has accordingly assigned to two able native instructors the sole care and management of this Female Seminary.

Mr. Araucan, the Principal, was assistant Professor with Dr. Calhoun in the Abeh Male Seminary for ten years, and Miss Gregory has been a teacher for eleven years in various Mission schools. The examination this week has proved how well qualified are the teachers for their chosen work.

WHAT A GREEK PRIEST THINKS OF IT.

At the close of the exercises this morning, the crowded assembly of spectators was addressed by several native gentlemen. The most remarkable address was made by the Greek priest, Ghuhreen, an elderly man, the ablest and most influential Greek priest in Syria. I will give a sketch of his address as nearly as possible, from memory. All persons interested in the Missionary work in the Turkish empire will view it as indicating an advanced state of liberality in those who once were among the bitterest opponents of Protestant Missions in Syria.

The addresses were delivered in the American Mission chapel to an audience of about four hundred persons. The old priest spoke as follows: "Man is a complex being. He has a material and immaterial nature, a mortal and an immortal being. He was made in God's image and had he remained in God's image, God would have been his companion and his teacher forever. But he fell and lost that image. In the fall he sustained two great losses—a spiritual loss and an intellectual loss. The spiritual loss was made good by the incarnation of the Son of God. The intellectual loss is to be made good by man himself, by using all the means in his power. You know my friends into what a sad state our land and people had fallen, morally, socially and intellectually. We had no schools, no books, no means of instruction, when God in His providence awakened the zeal of good men far across two seas in distant America, of which many of us had never heard, to leave home and friend and country to spend their lives among us, yes even among such as I am. In the name of my countrymen in Syria, I would this day thank those men and those who sent them. They have given us the Arabic Bible, numerous good books, founded schools and seminaries, and trained our children and youth. But for the American Missionaries, the word of God would have well nigh died out of the Arabic language. But now, through the labors of Eli Smith and Dr. Van Dyck, they have given us a translation so pure, so exact, so clear, and so classical as to be acceptable and attractive to all classes and all sects. But for their labors, education would still be where it was centuries ago, and our children would still have grown up like wild beasts.

"Is there any one among us so bigoted, so ungrateful, so blind to appreciate these benevolent labors, so blind as not to see their fruits! True other European Missionaries have come here from France and Italy, and we will not deny their good intentions. But what have they brought us and what have they taught? A little French. They tell us how far Lyons is from Paris, and where Napoleon I. lived, and then they forbid the word of God and scatter broadcast the writings of the accursed infidel Voltaire. But these Americans have come thousands of miles, from a land than which there is no happier on earth, to dwell among such as we are, yes, I repeat it, such as I am, to translate God's word, to give us schools and good books and a godly example, and I thank them for it. I thank them and all who

are laboring for us, and I would not forget the exertions and labor also of Mr. B. Bistany and Mrs. Thompson in the cause of Education. I would thank Mr. Michael Araucan the Principal of this Female Seminary, who is a son of our own land, and Miss Rufka Gregory, the Preceptress who is a daughter, of our own people, for the wonderful progress we have witnessed during these three days among the daughters of our own city and country in the best kind of knowledge."

He then concluded by wishing prosperity to the Seminary, peace and joy to all present, and long life to the Sultan Abd ul Aziz.

Such an address from a Greek priest was probably never before heard in Syria, and it not only shows how the people appreciate educational institutions under the charge of their own sons and daughters, but marks a new era in the progress of this land towards liberal ideas and Christian institutions. Other addresses were then made by Maronite, and Protestant native young men, and after singing an Arabic hymn, in which the great congregation were led by the eighty girls of the school, the assembly was dismissed with the benediction by the Rev. W. Bird, a son of one of the earlier American Missionaries to Syria.

This Institution was established as an experiment in the line of self-supporting education, entirely in native Syrian hands. It is thus far successful. Outside aid will still be needed for a few years in the support of charity-pupils to be trained as teachers, but the native Syrian Protestant Female Seminary is an established fact, one of the fruits of long and weary years of Missionary toil.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN SYRIA.

Of the schools for boys in Beirut and vicinity time would fail me to speak. There are few boys in Beirut who could not find schools to attend if they wish. The Greek Maronites and Greek Catholics have extensive schools. For Protestant boys, there is a primary boys' school, with ample facilities for instruction, under the care of the American Mission. There is also the Preparatory Department of the Syrian Protestant college, with one hundred boys in a still farther state of advancement and the college itself, under the care of Dr. Bliss with a full corps of instructors, with its first Freshman class of eighteen young men.

The Abeh Seminary, a few hours from Beirut, under the care of Dr. Calhoun, is now overcrowded with pupils. The boys' schools of the American Mission in Deir El Kouer, Ain Zehal-Tab, El Hadeth Aramoon, Shwair, Juue, Tripoli, Safeta, Deir, Minias, Sidon, Hasheya and Hums are all in a prosperous state. The girls' school in Hums has eighty pupils, one of the teachers being a graduate of the native Female Seminary in Beirut, and the other a former pupil of Miss Hicks in Shemlan. In Safeta a Protestant girl from Upper Galilee is teaching the girls and women in the most faithful and self-denying manner.

SUFFERINGS OF THE CHRISTIANS OF SAFAETA.

And here I feel it to be my duty to make a brief statement to the Christian world of the sufferings of that Protestant community in Safeta. They number 200 souls, and for three years have been in the crucible of trial and persecution. A heartless Greek tax-gatherer and Secretary of the Turkish government named Isbir Bashoor, some years since bought several olive orchards and mulberry gardens in and around the town, of a Moslem family. In making out the deeds, he included all these tracts of land, and all lying between them, thus, by a stroke of the pen, virtually turning the whole village out of house and home. But the people had title-deeds to their property, sealed by the Kadi and city Mejlis of Tripoli. Those who are now Protestants protested solemnly and carried the case to the law courts. Isbir bribed on every side and defeated them. Their crops matured and Isbir gathered them. Double taxes were imposed on those who were Protestants. Hardly a week passed but horsemen were quartered on them. They would not bribe and could not get a hearing. For three years they have been journeying on foot to Beirut and Damascus, begging and pleading for relief. One of the previous Governors General examined their case and turned Isbir out of office. The next week the Governor was recalled to Constantinople and before the new Governor General arrived, Isbir had effected his restoration to office again. They are now ground to the very dust. The British Consul-General, Mr. Eldridge of Beirut, and Consul Rogers of Damascus, obtained the appointment of a Commissioner to look into their case. That was the last that has been heard of the Commissioner.

The life of the Protestants is now one of constant terror. Our colporteur on a recent tour to that vicinity was attacked and nearly killed by the servants of Isbir Bashoor. He is lord of the manor. At times that poor people have been driven to the extremity of subsisting on roots and the grass of the field, while their wheat and olives are gathered by Bashoor.

The case is urged upon the Waly (Governor General) of Syria at Damascus, and he promises with honeyed words and does nothing. Isbir knows how to argue a case even with a Waly. Last winter the whole Protestant population of Safeta were attacked at midnight by government horsemen at Isbir's instigation, and driven out into the wilderness in the storm. Mothers carried their infants and led the older children and

some of the women were seized by the brutal horsemen. He promised them rest if they would return to the Greek Church. They declared they would die of starvation before they would go back again to picture-worship and the confessional. In February they were all arrested while at prayers and shut in a close room and smoked for hours. A refugee brought word to Beirut. The case was laid before the Pasha of the city and he telegraphed to Tripoli that they be released, but they derived no permanent relief from the Pasha's order.

Last month Abu Asaad, the leading man of the Protestants, was shot at three times in his own house while asleep. Providentially he had removed his bed the day before, or three bullets would have passed through his body. He pursued the assassins and recognized one of them as a servant of Isbir's son. The next day, in the Mejlis, he brought his charge, and they turned him out because he did not bring witnesses!

I see no human help for the poor people. I would lay the case before the praying people of God. They are worthy of our prayers. It is an affecting sight to see the men going to their fields or to the hills in the morning, carrying their New Testaments in their girdles, to read in the heat of day. The children who come to school are half naked, and their parents not much better clad. This week the native Protestant young women in Beirut have collected several hundred piastres and purchased clothing to be sent to the women and girls of Safeta. Accompanying the bale of clothing is a most touching Arabic letter, full of kind words and Christian sympathy and consolation. The case of Safeta has awakened deep interest throughout Syria, and calls for the prayers of all God's people.

NEW CHURCH AT BEIRUT.

The walls of the new church edifice in Beirut are now about half finished. This building will hold not far from 600 persons and afford great relief to the present crowded congregation. Its erection is a pleasant illustration of the principle of Christian union. It is the property of the American Board of Missions, and yet is built by the joint contributions of that Board, the Scotch Kirk Jewish Committee, the Native church in Beirut, and the English and American residents in Beirut, who represent at least seven different denominations. Few in number, they are thus enabled to present a united and harmonious front to the many enemies of the Gospel faith in Syria. The corner-stone of this edifice was laid a short time since. Among the documents placed within it, were an Arabic Bible, a list of all the members of the Native Protestant Church from the beginning, and of all the American Missionaries since 1820, as well as a list of the Anglo-American congregation, the publications of the American Press, and copies of the Arabic newspapers of Beirut and B'eddin.

At least two hundred and fifty pounds will yet be needed to complete the edifice.

Very truly yours, HENRY H. JESSUP.

COLLEGE RECORD.

University of Pennsylvania.—The annual commencement of this time-honored institution of learning was held in July last, at the Horticultural Hall which was well filled. The students, professors, and a number of the trustees, in procession entered the building.

Rev. Dr. Goodwin, Provost, opened the exercises with prayer. The order of exercises was as follows: Greek Salutatory, John Wandesford Wright; The Advance of Science, Charles Schaffner; The History of Cities, Robert Frazer, Jr.; "Let there be Light," Edward Fox Pugh; Unspoken Thought, Herman Cope Duncan; Fate of the Templars, Arthur Ritchie, Jr.; Master's Oration, Ancient and Modern Learning, Franklin Dick Castle.

The Degrees were conferred by Rev. Dr. Goodwin. The Degree of Bachelor of Arts on the following Members of the Senior Class:—George Henry Ball, Frederick Carroll Brewster, Jr., Francis Herbert Bruner, Willard Naglee Bruner, Samuel Brown Collins, Jr., Gerald Fitzgerald Dale, Alonzo Potter Douglass, Herman Cope Duncan, Robert Frazer, Jr., William Alexander Lambertson, William Henry Lex, Thomas Hollingsworth Lyman, William Wainwright Maris, Archibald Roger Montgomery, Edward Fox Pugh, Arthur Ritchie, Jr., Chas. Shaffner, Newcomb Butler Thompson, Charles Edward Van Felt, John Wandesford Wright.

The Degree of Master of Arts on the following Graduates of Three Years' standing:—James Bayard, Alex. D. Campbell, Franklin D. Castle, Henry C. Chapman, Charles R. Colwell, Asher Cook, Jr., Wm. J. Faires, Washington H. Gilpin, Charles Gilpin, Jr., C. Kene Gregory, A. Haller Gross, Alfred L. Harrison, R. Somers Hayes, Francis Heyl, Jr., De Benneville K. Ludwig, Charles E. Morgan, Jr., George Oakman, Robert J. Steen, Howard Wood.

The degree of Bachelor of Laws on Wm. A. Allison, Elias L. Boudinot, Alexander D. Campbell, Joseph C. Carey, John H. Colton, Robert Ramsey Crossdale, John A. Coulter, A. P. V. M. Dickson, John S. Gerhardt, Lloyd Lowndes, Jr., Edward A. S. Mann, Alexander Wilson Norris, Joseph Parrish, David R. Patterson, Jno. Paxson, William O. Purves, Samuel W. Reeves, Henry Saunders.

The degree of Doctor of Medicine on Leonardo S. Clark, Henry P. Munholland, Arthur C. Van Harlingen, of Penna.

Certificates of the Auxiliary Faculty of Medicine were given to the following persons:—William H. Bennett, Robert M. Bertolotto, of Pennsylvania; Pablo Cantero, (M. D.), of Cuba; Dennis N. Garner, (M. D.), of Delaware; Eliza R. Parritt, Abel Price, George Roberts, S. B. Roberts, Jonathan P. Worrell, (M. D.), of Pennsylvania.

The prizes were announced; after which the Valedictory Address was delivered by Gerald Fitzgerald Dale. The benediction was pronounced and the audience separated. All the young gentlemen who took part in the exercises acquitted themselves in a creditable manner.

Hanover College, Indiana.—Commencement June 25th. Nine graduates; one hundred students. The degree of LL. D. was conferred on Rev. J. N. Stirling, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin.

Williams College.—David Dudley Fields, Esq., in addition to his former gifts, has endowed a professorship of astronomy at Williams College.