

Original Communications.

VENICE.

We had been rolling leisurely along the almost level plains from Milan towards the sea, for even the express trains in Italy are not what we call "lightning trains," and were beginning to long for the end of the tedious journey, when we noticed the odor of salt air; and soon the more level marshes approached, and presently, while eagerly on the lookout for the first glimpse of the city, by a slight turn in the road we saw Venice, the Queen of the Adriatic, sitting in the very lap of the sea. It was a sight not soon to be forgotten; but we had not long to dwell upon it, for the train soon passed on to the long and splendid bridge which connects the city with the mainland, and we were at the station. Here new scenes awaited us. Instead of the usual crowd of cab men and omnibuses, assailing tired passengers with their loud cries, and almost threatening whips, we passed through the doors of the really fine station, and stood on the quay of the Grand Canal. Calling a two-oared gondola, in a few moments we were gliding through the Grand Canal, passing by palaces numerous, grand and beautiful, in their day, and imposing even now.

On the way we were hailed by a man in a shabby-looking boat, which he was paddling alone—and asked for alms. It was a little bit odd to find a *beggary in a boat*—but the poor fellow had lost a leg—and after all, those most likely to give alms in Venice would be found in gondolas.

We were fortunate to be in Venice on moonlight nights; in fact it was part of our plan to be. The first night of our arrival, there was a procession of gondolas, illuminated, with a large company of serenaders. The procession started from the front of the Danieli Hotel, passed along the Grand Canal, singing as they went, as far as the Rialto bridge, where the boats, (a hundred probably,) paused, and were tied to each other under that wide bridge of a single arch, while an address was made to the gondoliers, to which they responded by the utterance of a few single words expressive of satisfaction; and then several pieces of music were performed, very creditably, indeed. Then the procession moved slowly back again to the place of starting, the people crowding the shores and the fronts of the palaces on both sides of the Grand Canal, burning the most brilliant colored lanterns. These, added to the many colored Chinese lanterns on the gondolas, and the light of the moon, only a little past the full, made a scene picturesque in the extreme.

We hear so much of the *canals* of Venice, that we hardly think of streets in the city at all. Yet, there are more streets than canals. In fact there are so many bridges (367) that one can pass anywhere about the city without putting foot in a gondola. All the better class of houses have a canal front and a street front; very few have anything like a yard. On the canal side, all the houses have one or more doors, with stone stairs running down to, and under, the water. Here the gondolas are fastened. The houses spring directly from the water, generally, without an inch of footway, and the appearance to one who sees it for the first time, is that of a city suddenly inundated. But this inundation occurs twice every day, for the sea water flows in and out and through these canals as the tides rise and fall. As no garbage or refuse from the dwellings is allowed to be thrown into the canals, they are kept pure by the flow and ebb of salt water, for these canals, of course, have no locks, but are simply channels for the sea.

There are four thousand gondolas, and these are to Venice what our street cars and cabs are to Philadelphia. But of all means of locomotion the gondola is nearest perfection. Some one has said that it combines progress and repose, as no other conveyance does. The boats are fifteen to twenty feet long, resting on the water, not in it, (they have no keel) with both ends high up on the surface. They can be turned short around, therefore, like a tub, with a sweep of the oar. The gondolier, if but one, stands on a sort of deck or poop, near the stern, on the starboard side, as we should say, and his long oar is thrust out on the opposite side, resting in one of the hollows or scooped-out places, of a curiously-constructed oar-lock. The motion of the oar through the water more nearly resembles that of the fin of a fish, than anything else; and force is given by the gondolier, resting mainly on his left leg, with the right advanced some 20 inches, drawing the handle of the oar towards him in an upright position, and then throwing the whole weight of his body upon it. It is, therefore, a combination of weight and muscle, and more of the former than the latter. There is no jar or shock, whatever, to the boat or the passengers, only a slight rolling from side to side, to which one is soon accustomed.

The position and movements of the gondolier are exceedingly graceful, and seen at a distance, with the sharp outlines of his form against the sky, somewhat resemble the classic figure of Mercury. If another oar is required, it is used by a gondolier standing in the forward part of the boat, on the floor, (no deck), and using his oar as his companion does. The middle part of the boat is furnished with seats, generally, for four persons, although two are more comfortable. These are under a canopy painted black, (as all the gondolas are by law), and capable of being closed as tight as a carriage. The citizens prefer this kind, but instead of this, a linen awning

is used on many boats, and these are most employed by strangers, who wish to look about them. It is odd to see these boats fitting about with persons under the dark canopies, reclining on the cushions and reading their newspapers. The gondoliers, from their color, have a very hearse-like appearance, but the stranger soon gets accustomed to it, and ceases to observe it. The funerals, of course, must all be in these boats, but as, in the ten days I spent in Venice, I saw no funeral, I can't tell what appearance one would present.

The streets are very narrow. Many of them are not more than six feet wide. From the window of my room I reached with my umbrella the eaves of the house on the opposite side of the street. There are no horses nor cattle of any description in the city, and no wheel has ever rolled over its streets. The pavements are very smooth, and generally clean. Shops line the streets everywhere, among which those devoted to jewelry are most prominent, as is the case in all European cities. These are very gay and attractive, as all the ladies admit. The lower windows of the dwellings are always secured by iron gratings, which give them the appearance of prisons, and in those of the better classes, the inside windows open on a court or paved yard. The old palaces are remarkable for their grand and spacious stairways, and the beautiful floors are made of a composition, in which the marbles of Italy and the East, polished to the last degree of art, are curiously embedded. It makes a surface as hard and smooth and cool as stone, in the appearance of which, luxury and taste are blended in equal proportions. I was told that there is but one new house in Venice, (which was our Hotel Victoria*), and the floors and stairways are finished precisely as are the old palaces. The city was built and finished centuries ago, and as the population is one third less now than when the city was in her prime no new houses are needed. Some of the grand old palaces have fallen into the hands of curiosity-shop keepers, and some are used for warehouses, &c., and others are used for churches, (Protestant).

The people are very indolent. They are late appearing at business, opening their shops, or even going to the cafes,—and although there are more than half a dozen daily papers, not one is published before 12 o'clock, M. They retire early, and at 11 P. M., there are few people abroad. A policeman is never seen in the daytime, and at night they patrol the streets two and two, in full uniform. There are only 100 for a population of 130,000, and their services seem not to be required. During my stay in Venice, although I saw thousands of people in the square of St. Mark, and on the Mole every evening, I never saw an arrest, never saw a drunken man or woman, nor the least disorder or tumult; and this, too, at a time when there was an unusually large number of persons drawn there on account of the visit of the Empress of the French, and Victor Emanuel, who came to pay his respects to her.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN BOSTON.—III.

The Presbyterian church next to this in the succession, was formed in 1730. This church, like so many of the other Presbyterian churches that have had an existence in New England, was founded by emigrants from the North of Ireland. These emigrants, when they first came to Boston, were not received with that hospitality which had formerly been extended to the French refugees. They were looked upon as intruders, and treated as inferiors. A hard and bitter prejudice sprang up against them, but their lives and characters were such, that in a few years it died out. They proved a valuable accession to the population, adding both to the material and the spiritual prosperity of the city. They felt the coldness and rudeness with which they were treated; their situation affected them, and they called themselves "a church of Presbyterian strangers." Their first house of worship was a barn on Long Lane, now Federal St., which they fitted up for their use. This humble building served their purpose until 1746; and, during the few years in which they occupied it, was twice enlarged to meet the wants of their increasing congregation. In 1746 they were enabled to enter a better and a more commodious sanctuary, built in the then prevalent style of New England meeting houses. There is ample evidence that this was a very zealous and efficient church. It had, in its best days, the goodly number of twelve ruling elders, men who not only held the office, but performed its duties. The church was divided into twelve districts; to each elder was assigned a number of families over which he was expected to exercise a watch and care. The communion was administered only twice in the year, after the manner of the Church of Scotland, and was always a season of solemn and serious interest. During these services, it would often happen that the house could not contain the congregation. It would be thronged to its utmost capacity, aisles, doorways and windows all crowded.

The first pastor of this church was Rev. John Moorehead, a native of Newton, Ireland, a town in the vicinity of Belfast. He became the pastor on the 31st of March, 1730, the year of the organization of the church. His pastorate continued forty-four years, and was terminated by his death on the 2d of December, 1773. His ministry

* Hotel Victoria—decidedly the best and the cheapest in Venice—and this after trying the Danieli.

seems to have been eminently successful. In six years after the founding of the church, the number of communicants was two hundred and fifty. The ability of Mr. Moorehead was sufficient to hold his congregation together during his long pastorate, and to retain their affectionate regard at a time when Boston had as gifted a ministry as it ever had. His piety was earnest and sincere. He entered with all his heart into the revivals which, during his ministry, extended over New England. He sympathized with Whitefield, and always gave him a cordial welcome whenever he visited Boston. He was strenuous for Presbyterianism, and so loud in its defence that he went by the name of "Presbyter John." He was one of the three Presbyterian pastors, who, with three elders of their respective churches, on the 16th of April, 1745, organized the Presbytery of Boston. This was the first Presbytery formed in New England, unless that shadow fitting across the pages of a few old manuscripts called the "Irish Presbytery," had a local habitation within its boundaries. If the "Irish Presbytery" had a real existence in New England, then the Boston Presbytery must have the second place.

Mr. Moorehead was a man of great eccentricity, and like all such men was the subject of a good many jokes. The wits of Boston made free use of "Presbyter John's" peculiarities, and did not suffer many opportunities for the use of their satire to pass unimproved. That he deserved the ridicule he received in certain quarters, cannot be admitted for a moment. There may have been, and without doubt there was, an opposition to him on account of his fervid piety, on account of his endorsement of Whitefield, and on account of the double misfortune he labored under, of being a Scotchman and a Presbyterian; and ridicule was one of the forms in which this opposition found expression.

After his death, the church was without a pastor for ten years, from 1773 to 1783, and was supplied at irregular intervals by different persons. This was in consequence of the unsettled state of the country just before and during the war for Independence. In 1783, Rev. Robert Annan became the pastor, and continued such for three years. After his dismissal in 1786, the church having become greatly reduced in numbers, changed, by a unanimous vote, their form of government, from the Presbyterian to the Congregational. And in the beginning of the present century, this church, along with the great majority of the Congregational churches in Boston and vicinity, embraced the Unitarian doctrine. This was the church over which Dr. Channing was installed, and of which he continued the pastor until his death, and of which Dr. Gannet, the colleague and successor of Dr. Channing, is the present pastor, and is now known as the Arlington St. church.

A few years since, Dr. Blaikie's church laid claim to the property of this church, then worshipping in their house on Federal St., and commenced a suit for the recovery of it, on the ground that it belonged to them as the First Presbyterian church of Boston. The property was worth about one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. The Federal St. church offered to compromise the matter by the payment of ten thousand dollars, which was the full value of the property when it came into their possession. But this proposal was, very unwisely, rejected. Dr. Blaikie's church endeavored to show the identity of their branch of the Presbyterian church, with the church of Scotland, and by that means their identity, as a church, with Rev. Mr. Moorehead's church. But this little scheme of plunder, which, to many persons, who had no sympathy with the Federal St. church in their doctrinal views, seemed iniquitous, was very justly defeated in the courts. According to the law of Massachusetts, a church which has no historical connection with another, cannot claim to be its legal successor, merely on the ground of similarity in doctrine. Dr. Blaikie's church, organized as late as 1846, and composed wholly of emigrants, had no claim in law or justice to this property, even if his church could have proved an exact agreement in all points with Mr. Moorehead's church, which it is more than probable they could not have done.

The Presbyterian church next in order, dates its existence from the year 1823. It was organized at first, as a Congregational church, on the 27th of January, 1819, and Rev. James Sabine, who had been instrumental in gathering it, was recognized as its pastor. The church immediately took measures to build a house of worship on Essex St., worshipping, in the meantime, in Boylston Hall. Their house was completed and entered on December of 1819. This church was known as the Essex St. church. In the course of two years, a difficulty arose between Mr. Sabine and a minority of the church. This minority was composed of the most influential and wealthy members of the church, who had been the principal contributors towards building their house of worship, and who owned so largely in it. The majority of the church sympathizing with their pastor, and finding that they could not retain the house of worship, accordingly met together on the 6th of March, 1822, and, in their capacity as a church, voted to leave their house of worship, and resume their meetings for religious service in Bylston Hall. They still remained a Congregational church, and retained their old name of the Essex St. church. Not receiving, however, the countenance and sympathy which they expected from the other Congregational churches of the city, they, in a short time,

applied to the Presbytery of Londonderry, and were received into it on the 26th of November, 1823, and they were afterwards known as the First Presbyterian church of Boston. They continued still to hold religious services in Boylston Hall, until the 29th of January, 1829, when they dedicated a house of worship at Piedmont Square. The church had never been wealthy, and the location which they had chosen for a house of worship was unfavorable for their growth. Becoming discouraged, and thinking it a fruitless task to sustain a Presbyterian church, they made an application to the State convention of the Episcopal church, at its meeting in June, 1829, for admission to that body. Their application was granted, and they were organized as an Episcopal church under the name of Grace church. As an Episcopal church they still occupied their house on Piedmont Square, and Mr. Sabine taking orders in the Episcopal church, remained with them as their pastor.

The next movement for a Presbyterian church was that begun by Dr. Blaikie in 1846, a sketch of which was given in a former letter.

AXTELL.

THE CITY OF CALVIN.

BY AN AMERICAN CLERGYMAN.

MESSENGERS. EDITORS: The junction, but not union of the Rhone and Arve still continues, continuing also the same standard illustration to essayists, editors and European correspondents. Nearly opposite my lodgings the Rhone leaps bright and buoyant from the embrace of Lake Lemans, eager to return to his mountaineer habits. I followed him but at no such racing speed, down his left bank the other morning, and in spite of all forewarning, experienced a surprise. I was wondering, after a twenty minutes walk where the other river might be, when suddenly I found myself on a wee bit of promontory just wide enough for a foot-path, and the two streams hurrying to each other close by my side. It seemed as if I need only stoop to dip my hands at the same instant into both waters.

Looking a little to the right, every pebble was as discernible through the Rhone's azure depths as though only a current of air were over-passing it. Turn slightly to the left and you could see nothing but the surface of the dirty Arve, a rival to his neighbor only in the breadth and speed of his flow. And on they swept neck and neck in swiftness, but refusing all intercourse across that line of yellow and blue that divides them as far as the eye can see.

You can hardly look anywhere in Geneva without seeing the same thing—two streams, in fact three, running side by side yet ever apart. Call them if you please in the order of their rise and the length of their flow, Romanism, Reformationism and Rationalism. On the side of the town where I was, stands the lofty tower of the Papal Notre Dame; on the other side look down upon the loftier walls of the Protestant cathedral, where Calvin once thundered. In a street near by, you can easily find the site of the house where Calvin lived and prepared the sermons he preached in St. Pierre. You can as easily find, in a neighboring street parallel to Calvin's, the building where the skeptical Rousseau was born. Take an omnibus and ride for three quarters of an hour along the west bank of the lake, and you will come to Ferney or Fernex, Voltaire's old residence, and the place where he gave form and force to his infidel opinions, as Europe yet disastrously testifies after the lapse of a century.

A ten-minute walk on the east side of the lake brings you to the chateau of Merle D'Aubigne, the historian of the Reformation, who yet lives in a green old age, and whose influence will live long after him, but with a difference from the other as great as if the two authors had inhabited different worlds.

If it were asked which of the three currents has the widest and strongest sweep here in Geneva, I am afraid the answer would not be satisfactory to the Presbyterian reader. As to the spirit of the Reformation, if you regard every variety of its manifestation in literature, politics and general progress, it cannot be said to be confined to a narrow channel. But when you inquire after its strictly religious and evangelical character, it dwindles to something like a silver thread in the landscape. Reformationism in the gross has got a good deal mixed with the neighboring streams, Rationalism and Romanism. The forms of religion in each may be diverse, but the "denying of its power" is too nearly identical. The Protestant churches may have larger congregations at the morning service than the Romanish, but the remainder of the Sabbath is given up to pleasure-seeking after the fashion which Romanism and Rationalism have made so popular on the continent.

In truth, Geneva has not a very Calvinistic aspect on the first day of the week. Business scarce closes its doors, and pleasure certainly throws its own wider open. I am sure, however, that sound doctrine has able and earnest advocates here. At the French service in St. Peter's, the Sabbath I spent in Geneva, there was a vast congregation I am told, and the burden of the preacher's message was a warning to his flock against some heretical intruder who had been publicly seducing the people from their faith in the Holy Scriptures. And at the same cathedral, at a later hour, I was present in a company of about a hundred devout worshippers, and

heard a discourse not unworthy Calvin's pulpit, from the Rev. Mr. McLeod of the Scotch Church.

I said Calvin's pulpit, but though the cathedral of St. Pierre is the same building that heard the great Reformer's voice, the pulpit is another. It had become perhaps too old-fashioned, and has given place to a later, but not to the eyes of sensible travelers, better edition. Its furniture, however, remains the same, and is limited to a single chair. I meant to have attended the evening service at the "Auditoire," where the same clergyman was to officiate, and where the veritable pulpit in which John Knox ministered while in Geneva still remains; but I missed my way, and was conducted by a Swiss matron who meant it in kindness, to another parish church, where a worthy and venerable pastor was holding forth in the French language to a small audience. Although the Romish population is rather gaining upon the Protestant by immigration, I have full faith that the solid walls of St. Peter are ever to re-echo the testimony which was her joy and glory in much severer and darker times. "Reformation Hall" built in part with American and English money, is a comely edifice, and a token of the interest that the church, in all lands, feels in the maintaining of the truth of confessors and martyrs on this spot, made sacred by their memories.

NARRATIVE OF THE SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA.

The report that comes to us from the different Presbyteries of this Synod, is one of great hopefulness and encouragement. In the majority of churches, the year has been one of great prosperity, and there is a feeling of profound gratitude to God for His goodness and mercy.

There is every evidence of material prosperity from the fact that new church edifices have been built, debts have been paid, congregations have increased, and the financial affairs of the churches are in a good condition.

But more than all this and above all this comes the glad intelligence, that God's Spirit has been moving upon the hearts of the people. There has been a deeper consecration on the part of many, a more hearty cooperation of the laity, a quick and manifest answer to prayer, and larger numbers have been added to the Church of God than for many years previous. The different instrumentalities for Church work have been more thoroughly used and with more gratifying results than ordinarily. In some cases the elders are ready to bear their part in assisting the pastor; the Sunday-school still claims the best thought and attention of the laity; "Young People's Associations" are in many cases efficient and active, while many of our best women have found their mission in devoted work for Christ.

While all this is true, we cannot close without speaking of other facts equally true. Though congregations have increased, and the finances of the churches are in a good condition, it ought to be remembered that our whole country is rapidly gaining both in wealth and numbers. With all that there is to encourage, it is a serious question whether we are more than keeping pace with the population, whether we are doing any aggressive work for Christ on our home field.

While many of the laity also are devoted to the work of the Master, it is a sad fact that worldliness is on the increase in many of our churches, there is too little of the spirit of sacrifice written on the hearts of the people, too little willingness to give up time, money, all for Christ. It becomes us then, while renewing our vows and consecration to God, to unite in earnest entreaty that He will inspire within us all, pastors and people, the missionary spirit of the early disciples.

It becomes our sad duty to announce to the Synod, the following deaths of elders during the past year:

Rev. Halsey Dunning, pastor of the First Constitutional Presbyterian church, Baltimore, died January 11th, 1869. He was a faithful, devoted minister of the Gospel. He occupied a most prominent and important position in the church in that city. He wrought a great work in the name of the Lord Jesus. He was a ripe scholar, a progressive man, genial and kind in all his relations to the brethren. His last days were full of light divine. Though greatly mourned by his friends on earth, they can only rejoice in his happy exchange.

ELDERS DECEASED.

Carlisle.—Jacob Shrom; aged 72, died April 25th, 1869. Oldest member of the session.

York. H. M. McClellan, M. D., aged 60; died August 7th, 1869, after a service of thirty years as elder in York church.

West Chester.—Lambert Clark, aged 72; died May 16th, 1869.

Drawyers.—Jesse Higgins, aged 38; died August 21st, 1869.

Clinton Street, Philada.—Clem. Tingley, aged 75; died February 13th, 1869.

St. George's.—John C. Clark, aged 71; died July, 1869.

Lincoln.—David R. Stuart, aged 59; died October 3d, 1869.

Baltimore.—Wm. S. Hopkins, aged 54; died February 15th, 1869.

Greenwich Street, Philada.—Randolph Sailer, aged 36; died January, 1869.