

The Press and General Review

HISTORY AND APPEARANCE OF DR. ACHILLI.

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Dr. Achilli appears to be between 45 and 50 years of age, is tall in stature, with black hair and eyes; his countenance, habitually calm and thoughtful, is at times covered with piercing glances, which illumine his strongly marked physiognomy. He replies willingly, and with unwearied patience, to the questions with which he is assailed concerning the events of which he has been a witness, but he seldom speaks of himself and his sufferings, and avoids putting himself forward as a martyr in the good cause. We have seen him many times, both in private and before large assemblies; everywhere his humility is apparent, and his imperfect pronunciation of our language, adds a charm of originality to all he utters. The study of the Bible, and that alone, has enlightened him. Before leaving the Romish Church, he had held no communication with Protestants; he had never read even a Protestant book. As professor, he was charged with the refutation of heresies. In studying them, says he, after each lesson, I exclaimed, "So far, well!" But again I said, "This is bad, very bad." Far from being convinced by his own Romish arguments, he felt his reason and his heart agreeing with the Protestant errors he was trying to refute.

A Protestant Pastor, who resided for a long time in Italy, told us that many years ago he heard a Dominican friar preach with great energy in a Catholic church, against the mass and other vain ceremonies. He was at that time ignorant of his name, and now he discovers in the celebrated Achilli, the unknown priest, who exposed secrets in the sanctuary of error.

"I am Republican as well as Christian," (said Achilli to us) "The Roman republic was a good little republic, and let not the Pope flatter himself with recovering his power. The prestige is destroyed forever. The Romans cannot forget that they have once borne the yoke of the priesthood; and the Bible, which has been scattered among them, will have its course. Oh, if you knew how I love my poor fatherland I love it as one loves his birthplace—as one loves a suffering object whom he wishes to rescue, and yet is forced to abandon."

The Bibles which Dr. Achilli had for distribution, are deposited with the American Consul, who protects them against the fury of the priests. All that have been seized, have been burned. It seems that among the higher clergy many eminent men have adopted the principles of Liberalism, which if they are sincere, will conduct them to Christianity.

Achilli has great hope for his unhappy country. It is thence, says he, have sprung the shadows which have darkened the world, thence also should issue a great light. The Romans, indignant at the French republic for coming to suppress theirs in its birth, have always made a distinction between it and the French nation, for which they preserved all their sympathy. While the battle was raging on the walls of the Eternal City, there was dancing and rejoicing within the city. It seemed like a holiday. The Papal Government being re-established by foreign bayonets, Achilli was informed by his friends that he was running some risk; but he thought best not to follow their counsels, and hoped still to be useful to his countrymen. St. Paul, said he, lived two years in Rome; I asked God to allow me to remain there one year, and he granted my request, but I did not anticipate that one-half that period would be passed in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

Married in the month of June, Achilli was arrested one month after by the sbirri of the Government, and thrown into the Castle of St. Angelo, whence he would probably never have been released, but for the intervention of the French. The Cardinal Vicar took the trouble to come frequently himself to be assured that his prisoner was well guarded, and the bolts well secured. The emissaries of the clergy came several times to confer with him, and endeavored to induce his return to the Church.—Escape from prison could be effected only by means of stratagem; for during three months the delegates of the Evangelical Alliance had used every means in their power to effect the same object, but without success. He was brought out under guard of a picket of hussars, to give testimony in a certain trial. The first day some unexpected difficulty prevented the execution of the project of the French General, and Achilli returned once more to his sad prison. On the following day, while they were conducting him again before the same Council of War, he was hastily clad in the uniform of a chasseur, and found himself in the house of the English Consul, from which he immediately departed in the guise of a courier of the English Government. Arriving some days since in Paris, here he has been rejoined by his wife, Dr. Achilli intends soon to proceed to London, where he will be received by numerous friends, and with that admiration, so often pernicious when lavished upon those who have attracted public attention by some brilliant act, or some great misfortune. God keep him humble! You will doubtless be interested in knowing

the opinion entertained by Achilli, concerning the prominent actors in the brief and astonishing drama of the Roman Revolution. Mazzini inspires him with the most profound admiration. He believes that there is in this man a future Christian. In one of his speeches to the Roman people, Mazzini said, "If you drive out the Pope at one door, you must bring in Jesus Christ through the other." These are but words, and we know how often the name of Jesus has been profaned to the support of radical doctrines; but the conduct of the Roman triumvir has not belied his words. He lives in poverty at Geneva, who once had the control of the treasure of the city of the sovereign pontiffs. Garibaldi also left Rome without money to pay his journey. Achilli often asks his hearers to pray for poor Italy. This prayer naturally escapes from the hearts of those who love truth and liberty. Thy kingdom come, O Lord, upon that land of slavery and of darkness.

RECEIPTS OF THE PROPAGANDA.

From Evangelical Christendom.

There exists at Lyons a Romanist Society for the Propagation of the Faith. It embraces in the circle of its cavity, all the countries subject to the dominion of the Roman pontiff. It makes collections not only in France, but in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Austria, among the Roman Catholics of England, Holland, Russia, the United States, South America—in one word from one end of the world to the other—Well! The whole receipts of this Society during the last year amount to about £113,600 sterling.

It is important to notice this sum. The advocates of Popery speak often with disdain of Protestant charity. They maintain in a determined tone that protestantism has killed the spirit of sacrifice, that the disciples of Luther and Calvin are influenced by narrow individualism, that generosity and devotedness are contracted in the reformed communities, &c., &c., whilst the Roman Catholics are models of liberality, self-denial, and renouncement of worldly goods, and accept willingly the privations of property, to obey the voice of the Church.—This is very beautiful on paper, and the supporters of this statement have a marvellous abundance of words and rhetorical figures. If a cause could be gained by phrases or invective they would certainly have the palm. It is very unfortunate for them that arithmetic contradicts all their assertions. Arithmetic is a very exact science, and does not admit of mistakes. Compare, then, skilful advocates of Romanism, the sum of your collections for missions with that of Protestant communions: it is a small calculation, very easily made. You raise, in all the countries dependent on the holy chair, 2,845,691 francs. Something, I do not deny. But if you add together the sums collected for the same object by the different societies of England, France, Switzerland, and America, you will have a sum five or six times greater.—There is one British Missionary Society which has itself received almost as much as you have in the whole world. Be, then, more modest, ye great defenders of the Roman faith; examine scrupulously the facts; and especially do not so loudly accuse Protestants of cupidity or avarice. Before taking the mote out of your brother's eye, take the beam out of your own eye.

EPIDEMICS.

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The facts to be noticed here are—first, the connexion of Cholera with "a humid haze with bog-like smell," corresponding with the "stinking mists" remarked during the progress of the epidemics of the middle ages; and, second, the circumstance that it was soon after midnight, or at 3, a. m. when the crew of the Samson were attacked; while fourteen men who had been employed in the daytime in the docks, amid fetid exhalations, under a hot sun, continued well. Here we have again the most decisive evidence, not that fetid exhalations are harmless, as Mr. Martin would seem to infer, but that they are least hurtful when most rapidly disengaged and expanded by the action of heat; and that in their effects upon human beings, their malignity depends upon the accidents of temperature and winds that may cause them to sweep along the surface of the ground in a concentrated form. For aught that can be shown to the contrary, the "humid haze" seen by Mr. Martin may have been impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen exhaled the day before from the very dock he has described.

The presence of aqueous vapor appears to be one of the essential conditions of all epidemics; but the effect is not produced by aqueous vapor alone, for an ordinary Scotch mist will hurt nobody; the vapor must be impregnated with poisonous gases. It, then, naturally produces the same effect upon the lungs as poisoned water upon the stomach; and here it may be observed, that the numerous cases, quoted by the registrars and the Board of Health—as for example, the deaths in Wandsworth-terrace—cholera has been directly induced by the contamination of a spring or well with a neighboring sewer. No matter whether the elements of putridity enter the system in a gaseous or a liquid form, they will in either case produce a like result.

It has been remarked that the summer of 1849 was not one of great humidity, but, on the contrary, an unusually dry season, less rain falling in latitude south of 53, than in the average of seasons, but more rain than the average in the north of England. A warm and dry season, however, is the one most favorable to the process of exhalation; and in marshy districts, and on the banks of rivers there is always a sufficiency of aqueous vapors to arrest the upward course of deleterious gases, and to hold them in combination. * Although the season was warm and dry, Mr. Glaisher, of the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, tells us that the period from August 20th to September 15th, when the cholera was at its height in London, "was distinguished by a thick and stagnate atmosphere, and the air was for the most part close and oppressive." He adds, that the movement of the air at the time was about one-half its usual amount.

"On many days when a strong breeze was blowing on the top of the observatory, and over Blackheath, there was not the slightest motion in the air near the banks of the Thames; and this remarkable calm continued for some days together, particularly from August 19 to 24, on the 29th, from September 1 to 10 and after September 15. On September 11 and 12 the whole mass of air at all places was in motion, and the first time for nearly three weeks the fogs at Hampstead and Highgate were seen clearly from Greenwich. After the 15th of September to the end of the quarter the air was in very little motion.

"From the published observations of the strength of the wind daily at all parts of the country, it would seem that the air has been for days together in a stagnant state at all places whose elevation above the sea is small."

The fall of rain in August was less than has fallen in any August since the year 1819; but heavy rains set in at the close of September, and whether or not from their influence in precipitating noxious vapors, and so purifying the air, the epidemic immediately decreased in violence, and shortly after disappeared.

Another peculiarity of the late season has been an unusually small development of insect life. A snow storm and severe frost, the last week in April, would seem to have destroyed the ova and the larvæ of many of the insect tribes. The turnip-fly was missing in many districts, to the great relief of farmers, and butterflies were scarcely seen. This militates against the theory which attributes epidemics to "mists of animalculæ"; a notion which has no other foundation than the fact that immense flights of locusts, and sometimes a rain like drops of lood (the red color given by animalculæ), have been occasionally observed at periods preceding pestilence.

An analogous theory produced some impression in the alleged discovery by Mr. Britain and Mr. Swayne, of cholera fungi in the intestinal canal: but many of the fungi described have since been found to exist in every stale loaf; and an able report, presented to the Royal College of Physicians, has shown that the evidence is totally insufficient to establish fungi as a cause of epidemics; although every form of disease may lead to the production of fungi of a peculiar character, as a subordinate symptom.

Another theory has attributed cholera to a deficiency in the atmosphere of ozone, a volatile product of hydrogen and oxygen, but with a larger proportion of oxygen than in water.—Ozone has a deodorizing property, and is generated by electric action, and by combustion; on which account the exemption of Birmingham from cholera has been said to be occasioned by its great fires; but although the beneficent influence of fires to those who are within their influence, is not to be doubted, several towns in which the furnaces are as numerous as in Birmingham suffered severely; especially in the epidemic of 1832. Birmingham probably owes its comparative healthfulness to the dry and porous red sandstone on which the town is situated. The ozone theory, however, deserves some countenance from the fact that the season has been characterized by a low amount of electricity. This was observed by M. Quetelet at Paris, and by Mr. Glaisher, at Greenwich; and Dr. Adair Crawford states, that during the prevalence of cholera at St. Petersburg in June 1848, that "the electric machines could not be charged, and to a great extent lost their power," and that "the disturbed condition of the electricity of the air was also indicated by the peculiarly depressed and uneasy state of feeling which almost every body complained of; more or less some entirely losing their sleep; others slept more heavily than usual."

The Telluric theory is founded upon the observations of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, as frequently accompanying epidemics, and from the death of fishes in great numbers, as if from the escape of gases, which have sometimes been seen after subterranean disturbances, bubbling up through the water. This subject is handled with great ability by Mr. John Parkin, in his treatise on the 'Remote Cause of Epidemics'; and we incline to the opinion, that the true cause of the changes in the condition of the atmosphere which produce epidemics, may be found in those internal commotions; but not so much in the escape of any subterranean gas, as from the variations they produce in the currents of electricity, of which at present we know little or nothing. Some new agent, which is only occasionally present, there must of course be to produce a sudden vitiation of the air, in the same place where human beings, a month or two earlier or later, might breathe with comparative, if not perfect safety. Sub-

terranean disturbance producing an altered direction of the electric currents, is perhaps the simplest hypothesis by which the phenomenon is to be explained, and it is that which best agrees with the important fact, that the intensity of the morbid influence, alike in cholera and in marsh fever, is greater by night than by day. The following remarks upon this head are by Dr. Kelsall:—

"Any one who has witnessed the fearfully rapid course of blue cholera, can scarcely fail to be struck with the similarity of the disease to the symptoms of poisoning by some energetic agent; in fact, the patient appears to suffer from the effects of some specific volatile poison. Experiments have not supported the opinion that any peculiar electrical condition of the atmosphere has existed sufficient to generate a poison during the prevalence of the epidemic, but none have been instituted to ascertain the electrical condition of the earth's surface as the same period. It is true that, according to present theories, any electrical condition of the earth is supposed to influence that of the atmosphere, but such may not be strictly the case; and now, with this *petitio principii*, if it be permitted to suppose an electric current traversing the earth with some yet unknown relation to the magnetic meridians, the generation of a specific poison might be thus imagined.

"Cyanogen, prussic acid, strychnine, morphine, picrotoxine, and other vegetable poisons are compounds of the four elementary gases, oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, and nitrogen, chemically united in various different proportions, each possessing widely different properties—the vegetable electricity of the laurel, the upas tiente, the poppy, the cocculus indicus, and the cinchona officinalis—each acting on these elements during the growth of the plants, to elaborate their several active principles.

"A little variety in the proportions of the union of these four elements, produces vastly differing properties in the products—for example, the elements of quinine are 20 atoms of carbon, 12 of hydrogen, 2 oxygen, and 1 of nitrogen; and strychnine, a substance very different in its properties, is composed of 30 atoms of carbon, 16 of hydrogen, 3 of oxygen, and 1 of nitrogen.—

Quinine is composed of C²⁰ H¹² O³ N
Strychnine " C³⁰ H¹⁶ O⁵ N
Morphine " C¹⁷ H⁶ O¹³ N
Picrotoxine " C¹² H⁷ O⁶
Hydrocyanic acid " C² H N

"The substitution of phosphorus, sulphur, &c. for one or more of these elements, would also be productive of other poisonous agents.

"The requisite for deleterious products being constantly at hand on the surface, or immediately below the surface, of the ground, if there always existed a power which should cause their chemical combination, the inhabitants of the land would never be free from the effects of some resulting poison. The vicinity of drains and fetid stagnant water is found by experience to be more favorable to the development of the cholera poison than dry open situations; but the drains, cesspools, and putrid grave-yards of London have from time immemorial omitted the gases before alluded to, with sulphur and phosphorus, which in ordinary years have not resulted in the formation of this peculiar miasm, and there must be some reason why it should be so during the summer of 1849. A telluric electrical cause would account for the anomaly. In ordinary years the requisite elements are being constantly evolved, but remain inert because they are dissipated and blown away in the state of simple mixture: this year, if chemically united in certain unknown definite proportions, by the power of electricity, they may result in the formation of a volatile poison.

"But, although low and dirty localities evolve the requisite gases in greater abundance than cleanly situations, and so produce a greater amount of the miasm; still as these gases must be present more or less everywhere, cholera would be liable to appear in every situation where the electrical stream should pass through and this is borne out by the fact that no locality seems absolutely and entirely exempt from the visitation of cholera. If Birmingham or other places have enjoyed immunity from the disease, it is because the electrical current has not approached them.

"If it be allowed that the symptoms of cholera are caused by the absorption into the blood of a specific volatile poison through the medium of the lungs, then, in proportion to the quantity of poison inhaled, will be the malignancy of the consequent effects, which are abortive efforts of the nervous system to eject it from the circulation along with the serum of the blood, which is poured in immense quantities into the intestines, so that the patient may (in a manner) be said to bleed to death; and those slight cases of cholera, called choleraic diarrhoea, are occasioned by the absorption of small doses of this unknown poison, of which the system can rid itself with comparative facility. It may be that the flocculent deposit in the watery fluid ejected from the bowels is the poison itself in combination with particles of serum, which it has coagulated.

"There may probably be this analogy between the poison of cholera and that of common marsh fever. In swampy districts the electricity accompanying the sun's rays, or the ordinary electricity of the atmosphere, may act on the gaseous elements evolved by the swamp