

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND.

#### PROMINENT EVENTS AND REFORMERS.

It may perhaps be useful to follow the account given in my last letter of the great Swiss Reformer, by a brief narrative of some of the more prominent events which afterwards occurred in the history of the more important Swiss cantons, and of the names associated with these events, and by way of introduction we shall name two characteristics of the reformed churches of Switzerland in general, which may help to throw light upon the subsequent course of the Reformation in the principal towns of the confederation. The first of these

#### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

was the "reciprocal and persistent antipathy between the Protestant and Romanist cantons." At the death of Zwingli in 1531, a complete separation had taken place between the two groups of cantons. The more important ones, such as Zurich, Berne, Basle, Schaffhausen, Glaris and St. Gall, had adopted the new views, while the little mountain cantons—whose inhabitants, patriotic, no doubt, but ignorant—were completely in the power of the priests, obstinately opposed all reform. It is true that during 1531 a treaty had been signed, called the "treaty of religion," which, by proclaiming the right of majorities, recognized the legal existence of the Reformation; still the Romanist cantons continued to hold the "true Christian faith," and re-established the ancient forms of worship wherever they could, in the name of their local majorities. From that time the cantons were really two separate confederations.

The differences between the two groups became even more marked, when, according to the plan of campaign prepared by the Council of Trent, and applied by the Archbishop of Milan—Charles Borromeo (1538-1584)—the Jesuits opened schools at Lucerne and Fribourg, and the Catholic cantons formed the "golden alliance," by swearing fidelity to papacy. From that time (1586) all relations between Protestant and Roman Catholic children attending schools were forbidden by the priests, and the Swiss, so patriotic formerly, came to place the Roman Church before their country. Farther, the Swiss who served as mercenaries in foreign countries, in meeting each other under Protestant or Catholic princes, according to their affinities, found themselves fighting against each other in many battles. It was only, therefore, what was to be expected, that these local, but frequent conflicts, should lead to a more general war. This took place in 1656, on the occasion of the expulsion of some Protestants—an expulsion which was followed by tortures of an inquisitorial character. It ended by the

#### BATTLE OF VILLEMERGUE,

(Argovie) in which the Reformers were defeated. But strife having broken out again in 1712, in consequence of the people of Toggenbourg who had become Protestant, having expelled the bailiffs of the Abbey of St. Gall, whose property the Toggenbourg district had become in 1469, the cantons ranged themselves once more in opposite camps, to the number of 150,000. On one side were Berne and Zurich, and on the other the Abbot of St. Gall, Lucerne and the four forest cantons. In the fight which took place on the 25th of July, again at Vilemergue, the Protestants gained a complete victory.

The French Revolution effected for a time a fusion of the two parties, by making, in 1798, of all the cantons, the "Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible," and in 1803 Napoleon imposed a *federal* organization, which put an end for a time to all distinctions; but after the restoration in France the differences became even more marked than before. In 1847, therefore, on the installation of the Jesuits at Lucerne, took place the

#### WAR OF THE SONDERBUND,

which had the effect of uniting Switzerland by the triumph of the democracy, in the vote on the Federal Constitution of 1848.

A second characteristic deserving notice, was the "accord of the Protestant cantons amongst themselves and their sympathy for the interests of Reform abroad." The Protestant cantons had finally accepted reform with much unanimity, as was shown by the signed but unpublished formula of their faith in 1534,

prepared by Zwingli, and known as the "Confession of Basle." Calvin would have liked a more precise statement. Bullinger, assisted by Theodore de Beza, drew up a confession of faith which was broader, and which was signed spontaneously by all the Protestant cantons, in 1566. This declared the Word of God to be the only rule in matters of faith, and described the Holy Supper as a commemorative ordinance, but taught the doctrine of absolute predestination.

The influence of Calvin re-appeared in the "formula of Consensus," which was generally adopted in 1675, to arrest the advanced ideas which were coming from Saumur in France. It condemned alike pietists, mystics and rationalists, and provoked measures of "dismissal and banishment." The different cantons, recognizing the abuse of these measures, gradually restrained the application of them, and in 1725 the "Company of Pastors," of Geneva, through the influence of Alph. Turretin, (1672-1737) decided to ask candidates for the sacred ministry to conform their teaching to the Bible and not to the *Consensus*. Accord, in consequence, became almost complete at home.

The Protestants of Switzerland manifested their warm sympathy for the interests of reform abroad by enrolling themselves in the armies of Henry of Navarre, (Henry IV.) and William of Orange, and by offering a generous hospitality, notwithstanding the threats of France, to all French Protestant refugees. For this they were richly rewarded, not only by accessions to their industries and commerce, but also by foundations and legacies, which greatly benefited the churches and religious institutions generally. Let us now glance at the history of reform in some of the principal centres of Switzerland.

#### ZURICH AND BULLINGER.

Zurich, which already enjoyed a considerable political standing, was at the head of the movement under Zwingli, as we have already seen. Zwingli preached his first sermon in that city on 1st January, 1519. Bullinger, (1504-1575) who worthily succeeded him, continued his work, and founded establishments for the instruction of youth, supported by the State with a portion of the revenues of the convents. Bullinger had been a professor of theology at the monastery of Cappel, and having at Cologne become acquainted with the writings of Luther, his teaching was quite evangelical. Through the influence of Zwingli, whose religious views he shared, he consecrated himself to the ministry, and after performing pastoral functions in his native town (Bremgarten) he occupied Zwingli's place at Zurich. This city was full of German, Italian and English refugees, and long bore the name of the Athens of Switzerland. Indeed, through the impulse given by Zwingli and Bullinger, Zurich has ever since been distinguished for the education of its population—numerous scientific and educational establishments and valuable collections of all kinds are still to be found in it.

#### BERNE AND HALLER.

It was in 1529 that the Reformation was fully adopted by Berne, though the magistrates had authorized the preaching of the Gospel as early as 1523. It was Berthold Haller, a German, who first proclaimed the new doctrines here, timidly, it is true, but afterwards with greater boldness. Berne gave a good illustration of its having adopted the liberal ideas of Zwingli, in the judgment passed by one of its magistrates upon the condemnation of Servetus, Nicholas Zerkunden, chancellor of Berne, who wrote to Calvin on that occasion, using these noble words: "The time will never come when perfect unity in opinion will exist; and if we pretended to reserve the exercise of charity until the day of universal agreement, I fear it will never find employment. Man is besides so constituted that he yields more certainly to persuasion than to force. The same person who would stiffen in the presence of the executioner, could not resist the language of kindness." No wonder that Berne is still the ardent home of progress and activity in every department. This canton contributed largely to the triumph of the Reformation in Switzerland by its political influence. Haller died in 1536. In Berne and its territory more than two-thirds of the population are at present Protestant.

#### BASLE AND ECOLOMPADIUS.

The prominent reformer of Basle was Ecolompadius of Weinsburg, Franconia (1482-1531), who had been *curé* there from 1675. He was amongst the first to study the writings of Luther and to preach the Gos-

pel. The progress of the new ideas was at first slow, but yet perceptible. At last in 1529 in an assembly of the people, there were found but 800 Catholics against 3,000 Protestants. A change both in their political constitution and religious forms then took place. Ecolompadius, by his moderation, exercised a good influence both upon Zwingli and Farel. He was so affected by the death of Zwingli that he died the same year at the age of forty nine. Capiton, Hedion and Conrad Pellican were some of the prominent reformers at Basle, which was a place of passage for Farel and Calvin. So many French refugees settled there as to found a French church which still continues to exist.

#### LAUSANNE AND VIRET.

The doctrines of the Reformation had been accepted at Aigle, a part of the present Canton de Vaud, through Farel who was a teacher there, at Granson where lived Froment, and at Orbe where was born Viret (1511-1571). They did not penetrate into Lausanne until 1536, when the Bernese were masters of the country. It was Farel who installed them there in a great discourse at the Cathedral, and in a conference which lasted seven days. Viret was then called to be pastor and continued for twenty-two years when he went to die at Orther, after exercising pastoral duties at Nismes, Montpellier and Lyons in France. Viret had studied with Farel at Paris, and the two worked together for a time at Geneva, the gentleness of Viret modifying the impetuosity of Farel. An academy was founded at this time at Lausanne which played an important part in the Reformation. Later on, Antoine Court organized a seminary here, out of which went pastors to whom the restoration of Protestantism in France is due. At present Lausanne is entirely Protestant.

#### GENEVA AND THEODORE DE BEZE.

Farel announced the reformation at Geneva, and with him wrought Calvin until 1538, when Farel went to Neuchâtel, where he remained until his death, and Calvin went to Strasburg where he remained until 1541, when he returned to Geneva and remained until his death in 1564. But his public career is too well known to need further reference here. Theodore de Beze, born in Burgundy in 1519, went to Switzerland in 1548, and was soon afterwards made professor of Greek at Lausanne. In 1559 Calvin asked him to become pastor at Geneva and professor at the Academy which had just been founded. He afterwards replaced Calvin as Moderator of the "Company of Pastors," and continued Calvin's work until his death in 1605, at the age of eighty-six years, after rendering immense services to the Reformation.

Geneva was called the "Rome of Calvinism," and the pope said it was a shame to leave that city standing. The Dukes of Savoy in vain attempted by a surprise to retake Geneva in 1602, to bring it back to the old faith. Remaining under the influence of rigid Calvinism, it became the centre of broad and liberal ideas, so that in 1782, through the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, it had its *revolution*—prelude and image of that of 1789. Two parties—that of authority and that of liberty—both in politics and religion, have always been in presence of each other in this city—each victorious and vanquished in turn. Geneva, notwithstanding this strife of parties, is still one of the great scientific centres of Europe, and one of the bulwarks of Protestantism such as it is in Switzerland.

#### NEUCHÂTEL AND FAREL.

Farel, born in France, in 1489, had the honour of carrying the reformed doctrines into Neuchâtel in 1529, in the midst of threats of death, from which he was often in great peril. The Reformation was established here in 1530, at the close of a sermon by Farel in the great church in front of which now stands a noble statue of the bold Reformer. From here his influence radiated throughout all Switzerland, and here he died in 1565. It was at Neuchâtel that the French translation of the Bible made by Olivetan, was printed at the expense of the Waldenses in 1535. Olivetan had accompanied Farel who was present at the meeting of the Vaudois Synod which was held at Angrogna, in 1532.

#### THE CATHOLIC CANTONS.

The Reformation had at first some success at Fribourg, and a little later in the Valais, but the influence of the Jesuits, combined with other outside political influence, soon wiped out all traces of it in these cantons. The forest cantons always remained closed against its entrance. Still even the Catholic cantons