

Missionary Intelligence.

France.

PARIS, July 31, 1851.

One good result of the uncertainty as to the future, which is the prevailing feature of our domestic politics, may be remarked—an increasing number of citizens are sick of politics, and are turning their attention to religion. I mentioned, some time ago, that the sale of Bibles by booksellers had greatly increased. Besides a fine edition of DeSacy's Bible, with plates, which is expensive, an Abbe has published an *emasculated* edition, under the title of "*Bible des gens du monde*," in which whole books are left out, (all the apostolic epistles, for example;) but which he recommends, as containing all that is necessary or important for laymen to know of the Bible. There are, I believe, other editions published on speculation, but, besides all these, and the Bibles sold by poor people in distress, the supply to the booksellers from the depot of the French and Foreign Bible Society has numbered six hundred in a month!

Our labours (those of the Methodists) have been principally directed by the good providence of God to the centres of the Protestant population, and we have contributed not a little to the revival of religion among the Protestants in France. Many, now faithful ministers of the Reformed Church, ascribe their first religious impressions to the instrumentality of Methodist preachers. A considerable number of young students, at Montauban, some five or six and twenty years ago, met in class regularly with a Methodist preacher, and have since that time been centres of Gospel light and influence in different parts of the country. And some of the principal laymen who now devote, in different ways, their leisure hours to the Redeemer's kingdom, owe their salvation to the same instruments. How great, from these and similar causes, is the spiritual change produced among the Protestants of France since the conclusion of the last war with England. Immediately after the peace, some pious English, who visited Paris, were unable to find a copy of the Bible there. Your Matthias Bruen, who visited Paris from New York, with Dr. Mason, in 1816, describes "a first Sabbath in Paris as a day of unmingled pain, when they attended a Protestant place of worship, with a handful of people under a cheerless ministry; then strayed, with sinking spirits, into two or three of the churches, where there was the recital of prayers, in an unknown tongue, and no auditors; and at last took refuge in their own apartment, to pass the evening in tears and prayers for the thoughtless and prayerless multitudes around them."

At that time there were not more than five or six evangelical ministers in France; three or four in the neighbourhood of Nîmes—two of whom still survive, and are still near each other in a different part of France—the presidents of the consistories of Toulouse and Montauban, and one or two in the North, who are since dead. Those in the South had received Gospel light from the Moravians, and one of them had in his church a few souls converted by his ministry, and formed into a Moravian society.—One of them was a native of Lyons, in Switzerland, the birth-place of John Fletcher, whom he had seen in his infancy, and whom he resembled much in countenance, and in his spirit and temper. In Normandy, at that time, we had two small societies, in the neighbourhood of Caen.

At present there is reason to believe there are scores of evangelical preachers in the Reformed and Protestant State Churches; two Bible societies, a Tract society, three Evangelical societies, or even four—if that of Lausanne, which employs labourers in France, be reckoned—a Missionary society, whose agents are labouring successfully in South Africa, and a number of churches, supported by voluntary contributions, and independent of the State. These have lately, notwithstanding that a few of them are Presbyterians in their principles, joined together in a union of churches, and adopted a confession of faith, from which the expression of the peculiar tenets of Calvin is omitted.

The progress of the Methodist societies has not been proportioned to that of the general extension of the truth in France.—We have not been able to employ the press, which, in a reading country like France, exercises great influence; the little that has been done in this way has been done by the individual efforts, and at the personal risk, of one or other of the preachers. Our missionary society, with the wants of the world pressing on its means, has been obliged to limit its efforts in France to the support of the ministry, and of public worship. Our young converts who manifested zeal for God have been often taken out of our hands by other societies, who employed them as colporteurs, received them into their institutions of education, for schoolmasters or missionaries, and though these have often preserved an affectionate remembrance of our labours, their talents and piety have been employed to fertilize other fields than those which we have occupied. Our connexional principle has hitherto prevented our applying for help for these subsidiary efforts, which are nowhere more necessary than in France, to our brethren in Europe personally—while persons who had no connexion with us could make collections in England, to which our friends subscribed liberally, for the support of schools, the education of schoolmasters, &c. It must be remembered that the Protestants in France are a minority, a small minority, and must look for help elsewhere to carry on any extensive system of evangelization. We have been even obliged to diminish the number of our preachers. We are two less than we were in 1842.

Notwithstanding this, our prospects just now are very good, especially in the South of France. In a recent visit to the principal stations, I found at most of them not only larger congregations than heretofore, but a more earnest and decided spirit of hearing. There is, just now, such premonitions of an outpouring of the Spirit in some places, as excites the hopes and quickens the prayers of our pious members greatly, but more men are wanting in that neighbourhood.

We have twice been favoured in the South by gracious revivals. The first was in 1831. It took place in the villages of a valley near Nîmes, and produced for a short time a general awakening in two or three villages. Our numbers in France were doubled that year; and again the year following, (quadrupled in two years.) About thirty persons professed entire sanctification during the revival, and they were, in my judgment, most of them, consistent witnesses of that great Christian privilege.

Another revival, which took place more recently, was confined to two villages, and Nîmes itself, and only children were its subjects. Of the children then brought in, we have now two travelling preachers, a catechist, six or seven local preachers, and several school-mistresses. About fifty children were converted at that time in the three places, as it were, simultaneously; and by far the greater part are still in the fold of the Gospel. We are thankful for these demonstrations of Divine power and goodness, and at present many are expecting a similar power of Divine grace. I hope the knowledge of these circumstances will encourage the readers of the Christian Advocate and Journal who know the power of prayer, to stretch forth the hand of faith toward this country in prayer to God for his blessing. There are many who are looking upward just now. O that God would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might flow down at his presence!

We have some encouragement in poor, frivolous, sensual Paris. Our catechist here preaches in the Faubourg St. Marceau, the quarter of the chiffonniers, the rag-gatherers, where M. Pilatte, who is now in New York, laboured some time; and where M. Rousset, the author of the Tracts on Popery, has since opened a place of worship. M. Rousset, during his absence in England, whether he has gone to preach to his countrymen, who are in England for the Exhibition;—these poor people hear the word with the greatest attention, and there is good reason to believe that some are under Divine influence.—*Paris Cor. to Chris. Adv. & Jour.*

Family Circle.

Father Gruber and short Dresses.

A reminiscence of this Methodist pioneer, is preserved by the Christian Advocate and Journal, who obtained the facts from eye-witnesses:—

Father Gruber, it is well-known, was rather a stickler for plainness in everything, and especially in apparel. Nothing could be more offensive to him than any, even the least dispositions to copy the fashions of the world. Being at the time—say 35 or 40 years since—a presiding elder, he attended a camp meeting held in the neighbourhood of Franklin, Venango county, Penn. It was about the time a certain kind of female attire, then known as the "petticoat and habit," came first into fashionable, and then into general, use. The latter article resembled a gentleman's coat, and associated with other articles, rather tended to a graceful display of the female form. Some of the "better" sort of Methodist young ladies, dressed after the new fashion, attended the camp meeting in question. Their appearance attracted the by-no-means favorable regards of the Presiding Elder. So displeased was he, indeed, that he determined, if possible to inflict upon them a public mortification. The opportunity soon occurred. During some of the social exercises, these young fashionables, grouped together, were singing a hymn very popular about those days, but much less so, I am happy to say, in these modern times—of which the last line of each verse was a kind of chorus—"I want to get to heaven, my long-sought rest;" in which they were most cordially joined by the presiding elder.

They perceived him in their midst, and inspired by the presence of so distinguished a functionary, sang one with more than ordinary zeal and pathos. At length, however, it was discovered by those who were standing next to him, that when the presiding elder came to the closing lines of the verse, instead of "following copy" as the printers say, he sang, "I want to get to heaven, with my long short dress!" As fast as they detected the variation they stopped singing; first one, then another, till all had ceased, save the elder. But so far was he from stopping, that he really seemed to acquire momentum from progress; so that when he had engrossed the entire attention of the social circle, he was still singing at the top of his voice, and to the unutterable chagrin and mortification of the young sisters, "I want to get to heaven with my long short dress!" It is hardly necessary to add that the "long, short dresses" were quite scarce during the rest of the meeting.

A touching Scene.

A French paper says: Lucille Romee, a pretty little girl with blue eyes and fair hair, poorly but neatly clothed, was brought before the Sixth Court of Correction, under a charge of vagrancy.

"Does any one claim you?" said the magistrate.

"Ah, my good sir," she replied, "I have no friends—my father and mother are dead. I have only my brother James, but he is as young as I am. O, dear, what could he do for me?"

"The Court must send you to the house of correction."

"Here I am; do not fear," cried a childish voice from the other end of the court. And at the same instant, a little boy with a sprightly countenance started forth from the midst of the crowd, and stood before the magistrate.

"Who are you?"

"James Romee, the brother of this poor little girl."

"Your age?"

"Thirteen."

"And what do you want?"

"I came to claim Lucille."

"But have you, then, the means of providing for her?"

"Yesterday I had not, but now I have. Don't be afraid, Lucille."

"O, how good you are, James!"

Magistrate, to James: "But let us see, my boy—the Court is disposed to do all it can for your sister. However, you must give us some explanation."

James: "Just a fortnight ago my mother died of a bad cough, for it was very cold at home. We were in great trouble. Then I said to myself, I will become an artizan, and when I know a good trade I will support my sister. I went an apprentice to a brushmaker. Every day I used to carry her half my dinner, and at night took her secretly to my room, and she slept in my bed while I slept on the floor wrapped up in my blouse. But it appeared the little thing had not enough to eat, for one day she unfortunately begged on the Boulevard. When I heard she was taken up, I said to myself, come, my boy, things cannot last so—you must find something better. I very much wished to become an artizan, but at last I decided to look for a place; and I have found a very good one, where I am lodged, fed and clothed, and have twenty francs a month. I have also found a good woman, who, for these twenty francs, will take care of Lucille, and teach her needle-work. I claim my sister."

Lucille, clasping her hands: "O, how good you are, James!"

Magistrate, to James: "My boy, your conduct is very honourable. The Court encourages you to persevere in this course, and you will prosper."

The Court then decided to render up Lucille to James, and she was going from the bar to join her brother, when the Magistrate, smiling, said: "You cannot be set at liberty till to-morrow."

"Never mind, Lucille," said James, "I will come and fetch you early to-morrow." Then turning to the Magistrate, he said: "I may kiss her, may I not, sir?" He then threw himself into the arms of his sister, and both wept tears of affection.—*Sailor's Magazine.*

Maternal Influence.

During a lecture on Popular Education, recently delivered, Governor Briggs, related the following impressive incident:—

"Twelve or fifteen years ago, I left Washington three or four weeks during the spring. While at home, I possessed myself of the letters of Mr. Adam's mother, and read them with exceeding interest. I remember an expression, in one of the letters addressed to her son, while yet a boy, in Europe; says she, 'I would rather see you laid in your grave than that you should grow up a profane and graceless boy.'

"After returning to Washington, I went over to Mr. Adam's seat one day, and said to him, 'Mr. Adams, I have found out who made you.'

"What do you mean?" said he.

"I replied, I have been reading the letters of your mother." If I had spoken that dear name to some little boy who had been for weeks away from his dear mother, his eye could not have flashed more brightly, or his face glowed more quickly, than did the eye and face of that venerable old man when I pronounced the name of his mother. He started up, in his peculiar manner, and emphatically said:

"Yes, Mr. Briggs, all that is good in me I owe to my mother."

"O, what a testimony was that from this venerable man to his mother, who had in his remembrance all the scenes of his manhood! 'All that is good in me I owe to my mother!' Mothers, think of this when your bright-eyed little boy is about you! Mothers, make the first impressions upon the minds of their children, and those impressions will be the last to be effaced."

Honour Your Parents.

General George Washington, when quite young, was about to go to sea as a midshipman; everything was arranged, the vessel lay opposite his father's house, the little boy had come ashore to take him off, and his whole heart was bent on going. After his trunk had been carried down to the boat, he went to bid his mother farewell, and saw the tears starting from her eyes. However, he said nothing to her; but feeling that she would be distressed if he went, and perhaps never be happy again, he turned round to the servant, and said, "Go and tell them to bring back my trunk. I will not go away to break my mother's heart." His mother was struck with his decision, and she said to him, "George, God has promised to bless the children that honour their parents, and I believe he will bless you."