

man, but he was afterwards celebrated as the "Reformer of Hesse." Still, the work he had so far sketched was carried on by a number of anonymous missionaries, who wrought with so much the more success, as they were not suspected because they carried the goods of the merchant or the knapsack of the traveller. Geneva, from its position, was constantly traversed by those passing from France into Germany, and from the north into the south. In their conversations with the inhabitants these strangers told of the events transpiring in France and Italy. They spoke of the wrath of the priests and the constancy of the martyrs, and when one of them happened to be himself a decided convert, he hesitated not to avow his convictions and to refute the errors of the Roman Church. Taking out his Bible, concealed in his baggage, he verified his statements by texts which touched the hearts of his listeners, and inspired them with a desire to know more. On quitting, he left a copy of the Scriptures which passed from hand to hand, and was read in secret. Thus it was that by little and little an opinion in favour of reform was created, and gained adherents, at first few in number, and not very enlightened, yet sincere and desirous to propagate the new faith.

Reports of these conquests of the Gospel soon spread and caused serious disquietude on the part of the friends of Rome. Then followed the usual orders from the Pope to the bishops to have an eye on Geneva which was fast being Lutheranized, and which must be put down at any cost. But matters had gone rather far for this, for the reformed had begun openly to work to secure the spiritual emancipation of their fellow-citizens. Besides, Geneva had within its walls a very distinguished man,

PIERRE ROBERT OLIVETAN,

who was fulfilling the modest functions of preceptor to the children of Jean Chantemps. He had embraced with ardour the doctrines of the Reformation, and contributed largely to gain over also his cousin, Jean Calvin. This was the same man, as those who read my letters from the Vaudois Valleys will remember, who was employed by the Synod which met in 1532 in the Valley of Angrogna to make a French translation of the Bible for the Waldenses—a translation which became the foundation of all subsequent French versions of the Scriptures. The friends of the Gospel continued to increase, notwithstanding the concert of recriminations which arose on all sides. Catholic Fribourg accused the Genevese Republic of wishing to turn Lutheran. The Pope's legate wrote from Chambery to the magistrate that to his great grief he had heard of the "abominable heresy" openly preached in the city, and which was "infecting the souls of its children." Still, the activity of the Genevese in their new course continued and caused great joy to the friends of reform outside.

In the autumn of 1532 arrived at Geneva Antoine Saunier and William Farel who had already evangelized the district of Montbelliard in France and the Swiss towns of Aigle, Neuchâtel and Orbe. They had just come from Piedmont, where they had attended the Waldensian Synod. The meeting of these three,

OLIVETAN, SAUNIER AND FAREL,

in this city caused great commotion, and loud cries arose to kill Farel, to drown him in the Rhone, etc., but they were all safely protected. In 1533 the reformers, for the first time, celebrated the Lord's Supper in the open air, thereby completely separating themselves from the communion of the Roman Church, Guérin Muke distributing the bread and wine, with the Bible open before him, out of which he had read the Saviour's command for the ordinance.

At the beginning of this year the population of Geneva was divided into the following categories on the religious question. There were first: The convinced believers—a small but influential minority. Secondly: The political believers—citizens who sought, by the triumph of reform, the definitive rupture with every species of servitude to the episcopal yoke and union with the powerful reformed Cantons as a protection against the wiles of the Dukes of Savoy. Thirdly: The anti-clericals, who were groaning under the cupidity, turpitude and domination of the priests. Fourthly: The Roman clergy—their adherents and clients, and lastly: The moderates, consisting of a number of people who, through timidity and a spirit of conservatism, wished to continue the existing religious institution in a purified form, so as to preserve the unity of the Genevese

Up to 1533 this class had a majority in the municipal government.

In 1533 Pierre de la Baume the prince temporal and spiritual left Geneva for Gex, never to return. Still he continued to persecute the citizens by excommunicating their prominent men for "rebellion and heresy." Soon after, however, he lost his principality, his bishopric and his mitre, so that his anathemas were harmless.

On the 20th August, 1535,

FAREL, VIRET AND JACQUES BERNARD

asked an audience with the Council of Two Hundred, and pressed the magistrates to pronounce definitively upon the reformation of Geneva, Farel saying that he and his colleagues were ready to seal with their blood the truth of the religion they taught. Upon this the Council decided to convoke the priests, to hear them justify the practice of the mass and the worship of images; but meantime they voted that the celebration of mass should be from that day suspended—it was the Jubilee of this decision which was held in August last. This was the prelude to the final suppression of the mass on the 27th August, which completed the rupture with the Church of Rome. After this

GENEVA CEASED TO BE CATHOLIC

and became reformed. Such Romanists as could not conscientiously accept the new situation, nor live where the exercise of their worship was forbidden, left the city peaceably, and carried with them their personal property. Some ecclesiastics remained, but were not allowed to administer the sacraments or wear ecclesiastical habits. In December most of these left, one only declaring himself a convert to the new faith. The nuns soon followed the priests into Savoy, the Syndic accompanying them to the bridge over the Arve, which then formed the boundary of the Genevese territory. On the 21st May, 1536, the Council-General being assembled in the Cathedral, the Syndic asked if there was anyone in the meeting who knew or desired to say anything against the word and doctrine then preached in Geneva. No person replying, he added, "Do you now swear to live according to the Gospel and the Word of God?" All raised their hands in reply. The people of Geneva then unanimously and solemnly accepted the Reformation on that historical day.

CALVIN AT GENEVA.

"Calvin is one of those," says M. Guizot, "who have merited their glory, and of whom, after the lapse of three centuries, one cannot scrupulously probe the character and history, without bearing towards them a tender sympathy or at least a profound and respectful admiration." When he first arrived—the 27th August, 1536—he had no intention of remaining; and when Farel pressed him to stay Calvin resisted at first, feeling that he was better fitted to defend the Reformation in his study than by action. Then Farel, seizing him by both hands and looking straight into his face, said to him in a voice of emotion: "Thy only motive to refuse me is attachment to thy study. I announce to thee in the name of the living God, that if thou sharest not the holy work in which I am engaged, the Lord will curse the repose thou seekest, and the works thou preferrest to the service of Jesus Christ." These words penetrated the conscience of the young Frenchman, and he consented to remain; and by his faith and incorruptible love of the truth, he soon changed the condition of affairs not only here but in a considerable portion of Europe. He doubtless committed many mistakes, but his faults were inseparable from the troublesome times in which he lived; and were redeemed, in part at least, by his rare virtues. A few points only can be here referred to in regard to Calvin's action at Geneva. In the first place, he found the reformed without unity or organization, and, therefore, subject to uncertainty, confusion and anarchy. He saw the danger of this wavering, disunited and scattered character of reform, and set himself to provide a remedy. A settled doctrine which would give to believers a solid basis, and place them under the shield of the Word of God, was wanted, and this the Catechism and Christian Institutes of Calvin supplied to Western Europe, and soon became the manual of the reformed. He next organized the

PRESBYTERIAL SYSTEM OF CHURCH ORDER

which secured the fair representation of the churches in local, provincial and general synods, and gave them

all a common direction. Finally, in those disturbed times the reformers needed a centre which should be a base of action and point of departure. Geneva became this centre. From it went forth, far and wide, Bibles and Testaments, books of controversy and of piety, from presses kept in constant activity, performing a work whose importance it is now impossible fully to estimate. From it, too, departed pastors and evangelists, educated in the school of Calvin, and ready to preach the Gospel in the face of fire and sword and even martyrdom itself. In every time of difficulty these men looked for counsel and advice to "the holy city" and the "venerable company of pastors," and above all to the Reformer who had prepared them for their work, not merely by communicating theological knowledge, but something of his own brave spirit and Christian enthusiasm. From Geneva, too, went forth those letters which carried into the smallest parishes as well as into the chateaus of France, into the mountains of Scotland as into the plains of Germany and Poland, even into the towns of Bohemia, and to the occupant of the throne of England, advice, encouragement or reproach from the "Man of Geneva." It was thus, thanks to the genius of Calvin and the labours of his fellow-labourers, that "Europe was saved by Geneva"—to use the expression of Michelet, the French historian—and that Geneva became for a time "a city seated on a hill," whose light enlightened many lands.

THE CITY OF REFUGE (1535-1787.

Even before accepting reform, Geneva had been the refuge of a crowd of people persecuted on account of their faith. Afterwards, when the Gospel was purely preached, it became from its position, the spot where were soon united those who escaped the stake erected by the King of France and the horrible massacres amidst the Vaudois Valleys—nobles exiled from Italy, Spaniards pursued on account of their faith, Dutch reformers, and even at one period many English—John Knox among the number—who had to fly during the reign of Mary to escape death—all were finding a secure resting-place. In this way Geneva was enriched by the presence, for a longer or shorter time, of the choicest spirits of Europe. Some established manufactures which became very prosperous—others, printing-presses, which more than anything else helped to popularize in Europe ideas of reform. Many thus grew rich, and at a later period became the aristocracy which long directed the affairs of the little republic. The Vaudois of the Valleys, accustomed to agriculture, farmed the lands of Jussy and Satigny, and became the principal stock whence sprang many of the Protestant families which are still to be found in the rural parts of the canton.

It is worth noting that with the exception of Viret, who was Swiss, all who took an active part in introducing the Reformation into Geneva were

FRENCH REFORMERS.

And for this Geneva has not been ungrateful; for in 1831, as pointed out in a previous letter, the Evangelical Society of Geneva was founded for the purpose of evangelizing certain districts of France, and continues to labour amongst the descendants of the old Huguenots to the present time. One sentence more

IN CONCLUSION.

Sunday, 23rd August last, was ushered in by a merry peal of bells from all the Protestant temples of Geneva, both in town and country, announcing the dawn of the "happy day" which was to commemorate the event which not only secured to Geneva its political and spiritual independence, but conferred upon it the solid and durable benefits of the religion of the Gospel. A stone was next inserted in the wall of the Cathedral bearing the following inscription: "In August, 1885, the Protestants of Geneva celebrated the 350th anniversary of the Reformation, thereby boldly affirming their immovable attachment to the reformed religion, and their profound gratitude to their valiant ancestors." In the opinion of many the Protestants of Geneva would have better testified their gratitude to their "valiant ancestors" by exhibiting to the world the pure faith and correct lives which distinguished those old heroes, than by mural tablets however elegant. For, as I have shown in previous letters, many of the pastors now teach a very imperfect Gospel, and many of the people exhibit very imperfect lives.

T. H.

Clarens, Switzerland, October, 1885.