THE PROTECTOR

AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION: BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE."—Prov. xiv 34.

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(For the Protector.)

ON A YOUNG FRIEND LATELY DECEASED.

O, Sarah dear! I see thee now,
As when thou wert a child,
When flowers all-wreath'd thy sunny brow
Pluck'd from the woodland wild.

I see thee in thy maiden bloom
So joyous, fresh and fair;
Then sparkling eyes lit up the room,
Where'er thou enter'd there.

Some song of Scotland thou wouldst sing—
Some song of olden time—
And thy rich notes were sure to bring
My heart's responsive chime.

Thy laugh I hear so blithe and sweet—
Thy speaking eye I see—
When those leal friends were wont to meet
Beneath the "Birchen tree."

In night's deep hush, when none is near,
Oft comes thy image bright,
And, smiling, thou dost seem to cheer
And point to realms of light.

O, much I lov'd that pure young heart
So innocently free;
And, years to come, the tear will start
Trembling to thy memory.

At wordly shrines thou never knelt,
But nobly bore thee on—
Another's woes thou keenly felt,
But never breath'd thine own.

To make all happy was thine aim
Until thy latest end;—
Unselfish, kind, and aye the same,
Thou never lost a friend.

But angels whisper'd round thy head,
"Thy Saviour calls thee home"—
Then, meekly bowing, sweetly said,
"I come, I come, I come!"

Thou wert the first of that young band
To wing thy flight above,
And they were taught by death's cold hand,
How frail their blessings prove!

But they will meet thee yet elate
When life's dull dream is o'er,
And, fitted for a purer state,
Will love and part no more

Charlottetown Royalty.

RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT.

ROMANISM IN SOUTH AMERICA.

A LETTER FROM THE REV. H. B. PRATT, DATED BOGOTA, NOVEMBER 25, 1856.

Many circumstances have combined to hinder my giving you a connected view of things as they present themselves to the eye of an observer here. But since such a view may be interesting to some of your readers, I will try and discharge a duty which attention, too undivided perhaps, to my Spanish studies, in the discouragement occasioned by the almost universal indifference of those from whom I had expected support, have hitherto prevented.

EARLY HISTORY OF BOGOTA.

Bogota is an old city for the New World, and much exceeds in age our more thriving cities of the north, having been founded eighty-two years before the landing of the Pilgrim fathers. It is not a little remarkable that but forty-six years elapsed after Columbus planted his foot on the shores of St. Salvador, when the Spaniards had discovered this coast, ascended the Magdalena six or seven hundred miles, traversed the mountains whose roads now are bridle paths, discovered this noble plain, subdued in part the warlike savages who peopled it, and founded the future capital of an independent republic. It is a proof at once of the unvaried activity of Spanish enterprise, fired by the lust of gold, and of the notable place which those aborigines held among the northern tribes of South America. The old annalists of the conquest, report their number as reaching the fabulous amount of *two millions*, who, refusing to share or part with their own, were butchered like sheep, and their name blotted out. In the course of a few years they were almost exterminated, and their miserable descendants, who crouch submissively to the children of their conquerors, appear to have lost entirely their language and national customs, together with all knowledge of the greatness and valour of their forefathers.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE COUNTRY—ITS CLIMATE.

There is but little doubt of the fact, that this magnificent plain was once the bed of an immense lake or inland sea, and was drained by the convulsion which opened for it an outlet at the falls of Tequendama. A large part of it is yet occupied by lagoons and extensive marshes. The city is built on the gently sloping foot of two mountains, which rise above it fifteen hundred or two thousand feet, and which cause rivers of water to flood the streets at frequent intervals during the rainy seasons. The rain, however, does not by any means confine itself to its prescribed seasons, for at these great altitudes, the clouds often float very low, and, at a distance, seem sometimes actually to rest upon the plain: so that lodging against the mountains, which attract them, they descend in showers upon the city, utterly regardless whether it be in season or out of season. The climate appears to me to be the best possible, the thermometer ranging generally between fifty-eight and sixty-two degrees. On my first arrival from the torrid climate of the river, I thought it rather chilly, but in a short time learned to prefer it much to the more luxurious climates, which are to be found at a few leagues distance. The atmosphere seems almost perfectly clear. From a slight elevation above the city, the view of the plain is enchanting, as it stretches for leagues away in its prairie verdure, embosoming lakes, rivers and marshes, till it is bounded by the opposite range of hills and mountains. When the sky is clear, the encircling hills at a distance of fifteen or twenty miles, rise in the most perfect distinctness with scarcely a tinge of blue, the varied colours of different formations, the washings of rain torrents, with the ravines and other inequalities of surface more distinct than they would show with us at the distance of half a league. A short range of snowy mountains over-topping all, lie off in the east, at a distance of thirty or forty leagues. One peak (Tolima) is very striking in appearance, its regularly sloping sides, and snow-clad cone piercing the heavens in majestic beauty, whilst another, (Ruiz) appears of enormous size, rising to about the same elevation, it looks like the back of a huge elephant, its top and gently sloping sides clothed with eternal snows.

THE CITY—STYLE OF BUILDING—CATHEDRAL.

The city of Bogota has a population of forty or fifty thousand. The appearance is altogether Spanish, and the style of building entirely different from ours. The houses are usually of one or two stories, enclosing two, or even three courts, or "patios;" but, although usually unpromising or even uninviting without, they are often as commodious and pleasant within, as our own. They are built I suppose, with some regard to earthquakes, (though they have never done serious damage here,) occupying several times the space which in our cities could be allowed to single dwellings. There are in and around the city about twenty-six churches and thirteen convents, for monks and nuns. Each convent has a church attached, the church and convent occupying sometimes the whole block, and in one case two. These convents enjoy the reputation of being very rich, and have claims on a very large part of the property in the city. The Cathedral is an imposing structure, facing on the principal plaza. In length it reaches from street to street, and in breadth occupies half the block. It is a noble building, and must have been built at enormous cost. Within, it presents the appearance of two buildings rather than one. The churches here, like those in Carthagena, are not made for preaching, but for saying mass, and for this reason there are very few seats, and these rather along the sides and beside the pillars, than in the body of the building, for the style of attendance on mass, (which is nearly all the worship they have here) is to throw a mat upon the floor, and kneel; and if there be a good attendance when there is preaching, the larger number must needs stand.

ROMISH PRIESTHOOD IN BOGOTA.

The number of ecclesiastics in the city is enormous, amounting to several hundreds. The regular clergy, I am told, are more than two hundred; and so it seems, for it is impossible to walk any distance without meeting a half a score of them in their black gowns and sacerdotal hats. The ecclesiastical style of dress is quite a singularity. They seem to have a peculiar dress by which they are to be known, according to their rank and the order to which they pertain, from the Archbishop and Internuncio down to the lads of twelve or fourteen years, who hope to be "put into the priests' office," or who serve as acolytes to aid in the mummeries of an idolatrous worship. They find use for all varieties and shapes of black hats, allowing to the archbishop and internuncio a mixture of the favourite "scarlet" and green; and for gowns of all shapes, sizes, and qualities. Some with a sort of hood to cover the head, and some without; some of a light colour, some mixed, but nearly all black, and in shape from what appears to a genteel broadcloth cloak, reaching to the ancles, down through nondescript varieties, to that which leaves the [illegible] from an old woman. Why the Romish clergy in the United States [illegible] adopt the fashions of Rome, I [illegible] know not why, where we truly see "Romanism at home," they should impose upon the ignorant and credulous, by affected singularities of dress, let them reply, who would overturn the order and decency which prevail in Protestant lands, happier far than those where Rome has planted the foot of her accursed dominion, and "fouled with her feet" the pure and holy streams whereof the flock of Christ should drink. God in mercy grant us, that these regiments of lazy, ignorant and hungry priests, vicious too, withal, and hooded monks, with all their auxiliary apparatus of convents and confessionals, may ever be esteemed strangers and aliens in our land of Bible Christianity!

TRUE CHARACTER OF ROMANISM.

How absurd it is for persons to judge of Romanism from the appearance which she wears in Protestant lands. There the surrounding Protestant influence modifies its character, so far as it is capable of change. She must approximate at least the standard of Protestant morality, and their clergy must be superior in all respects to four-fifths of their brethren in their own lands. Were it not so, they could exert no influence whatever; and yet they have the effrontery to demand that their system be judged by what Protestant influences has made it to be. We find in this country and others similarly circumstanced, an admirable illustration of the legitimate workings of the doctrines of Popery. They have nothing to complain of, in this judgment, for until very lately, Protestantism has been excluded by force of law, while through the schools and confessionals, they have had free scope for exerting their best influences during the formative period of human character, so that they are responsible for the result. If it be said that nearly all the youth and intelligent manhood are deists, it may be answered that their mothers and wives are all "good Catholics;" and we say that if we have a nation of holy and God-fearing wives and mothers, we will have, at the least, a nation of religion-respecting men. So that the system is responsible again for the wide spread deism which prevails amongst the thinking classes. If Christianity as it prevails here, claiming to be the only Christianity, and denying the right of private judgment, be weighed in even balances, by calm and impassioned reason, it will be found wanting; and if this be the only Christianity, deism is the inevitable result. I met while on the coast, a young Irishman, from western New York, who had spent nine years in this country; and in conversing with him on the importance of his personal salvation, he said to me that he was a Catholic, but, that though he admitted the importance of his soul's salvation, he had not, and could not attend the church services in this country, because it appeared so absurd, and many of their rites were so ridiculous; nor could he believe that the religion was the same as his own. This was the testimony of a matter-of-fact character—a North American Catholic, who judged things as he saw them. The unconstrained operations of Romish doctrine deserve to be weighed attentively by those misnamed Protestants, who, finding no power or efficacy in evangelical doctrines, and ridiculing the gloriously transforming power of the Spirit of God, desire to seek their salvation in the magical virtues of sacraments and ceremonials. St. Paul said to the Corinthians, "I bless my God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas, for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 14, 17.) The preaching of the cross of Christ, with earnest reliance on the promised influences of the Spirit of God, was his only hope for the conversion of men. But many years after he was gathered to his fathers, it was discovered that the apostle was greatly mistaken in the light estimate he made of baptism, which has proved to be the very gate of heaven, while sacraments and ceremonials are found to be of immensely greater importance than the preaching of the Cross of Christ. I am surely within bounds when I say, that of fifteen hundred priests in New Grenada, there are not fifty who ever pretend to preach, and of the fifty, there are not five who would preach what even here would be called a "good sermon;" and of the five, there is not one who would preach salvation through the blood-shedding of Christ. And why not so? What can preaching effect? Nothing. Grace must come through sacramental channels if it come at all. The preaching is of little other use (if there be no pestilential heresies to denounce) than to persuade men to avail themselves of the sacraments, and revere the Church and her ceremonials; and if they be so disposed already, as they are whenever there is no exercise of private judgment, but rather abounding ignorance, then preaching is wasted breath. This system of mechanical religion is not only destructive of true piety, but is necessarily productive of ignorance and vice, among both priests and people. With us their priests must be educated men; they must preach; if not Christ, at least some saint, or else they will not be able to keep their flock together, nor resist the tide of Protestant influences which sweep around them. But here they have been undisturbed for more than three hundred years; there has been here no Protestant standard to imitate; so that they have formed their own. And what need is there for an educated and pure ministry? None, unless the public voice of the community demand it, as some are now beginning to do, loudly. If the people outstrip the clergy, then must a few of the clergy keep pace with the people; but as for the rest, what need? Grace is communicated mechanically, and with this communication the intellectual and moral character of the priest has nothing to do. Episcopal hands have imparted grace to him in his official character, (however graceless soever, personally, he be.) and made him a channel of grace to others, who like him, may claim to have grace professionally, by virtue of union with the gracious Church which is a fountain of grace to all her children, though he be destitute of it personally. It matters not whether the priest be learned or unlettered, a good man or a knave, a wise man or a fool; so that he be a priest, it is enough. He is then empowered to offer propitiatory sacrifice for the living and for the dead. He is authorized to celebrate the seven sacraments, every one of which confers the grace of God, as certainly as fire imparts heat to iron, or as water cleanses impurity and filth. A priest may be a very dunce, or sunk in moral character below the lowest standard of decency, what does it signify, if the people will but avail themselves of his mediatorial and priestly office? His baptism as truly regenerates and constitutes the recipient a member of the family of God and an heir of glory, as would baptism by the Pope; absolution from his lips is as efficacious in blotting out sin; matrimony performed by him is as truly sacramental and indissoluble; his words of incantation perform as truly the miracle of transubstantiation, and give the people to feed upon their God; and the last unction administered by his hands is as sure a passport to the departing soul, as would have been that of St. Peter himself, who unfortunately, lived too early, by some centuries, to have availed himself of this expeditious mode of saving the souls of men. Hence it follows, that since it is [illegible] easier to find a bad priest [illegible] nearly as well as a good one, the priests generally are of poor education, and worse morals. In proof that this is the legitimate operation of the Romish Church, we have only to [illegible] it in those countries where it is most undisturbed by foreign influences, or as it was before the Reformation, and we will find the great bulk of the clergy ignorant and vicious, to a proverb. It cannot be said that this is owing to the want of rivalship with other sects, for religion would be a farce indeed, if it derived its life and springs of action from without, rather than from within.

THE INFLUENCE OF THIS RELIGION UPON THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE.

And what is the effect on the people? This is, if possible, even more disastrous. It leads to the unnatural divorce, in their conceptions, between the possession of grace and its exhibition, between a renewed heart and a holy life. In partaking of every sacrament, if there be but a willing mind, the grace of God is received, and the title to heaven is sealed. And yet the recipient cannot perceive any change in his heart, habits, desires or affections, nor can others perceive it in his life. And what is the result? In spite of all the learning and eloquence which may be used to prevent it, the people will of necessity believe that grace and the favour of God are not inconsistent with a "heart of stone," and a life of unrestrained worldiness and sin. I need not say here, that their accepted standard of *Christian* morality is very different from our own. The idea of a religion truly spiritual is almost unknown, and a faith which purifies the heart and works by love, is esteemed a thing too celestial for the attainment of any but those who aspire to be "Saints." Even their more intelligent priests seem utterly incapable of understanding the legitimate operation of the gospel on the individual and on the community. I have tried to set before an intelligent Italian priest, (who was one of my travelling companions, while on the river,) by facts which furnished unmistakable proof, some idea of the comparative purity of morals amongst us, and what are the lowest forms of it, which are tolerated in our church members, but he seemed unable to comprehend or believe it. In regard to things which are the commonest forms of morality, things most obligatory, and the least that could be expected, such as fidelity to the marriage vow, he would shake his head and say, that human nature was the same the world over; he knew what it was in Italy, and could not believe that it was materially better anywhere else. They could be Christians, but it was too much to be expected that they would all be saints. Such then is Rome. She lowers the standard of moral judgment, connives at the active corruption of the heart, degrades and defiles the conscience, makes the priest master of the secrets of both heart and life, causes him to doubt the possibility of a high degree of moral culture in the community, and makes him content with a very low degree of it amongst his people, as being the most that can with reason be expected, in a state so imperfect as is the present life.

THE LOWER CLASSES OF POPULATION—THEIR MORAL CHARACTER.

The moral character of the lower classes here has reached almost the lowest point—yet they are "good Catholics," they go to mass, receive absolution, "eat the flesh of the Son of Man," do not touch meat on a fast-day, though not puritanical as regards Sabbath observance, they make amends for this on some greater day of man's appointment, and above all, would scorn to be called a "Jew," that is, a Protestant. I have been amazed beyond measure at what my eyes have seen and my ears have heard; another could scarce have made me believe, were not the proof daily before my eyes, in this class of people, that the unnatural and revolting conjunction were so possible and that those whose lives are so impure, should yet regard themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven. Those in pure churches, who would "serve God and Mammon," who try the perilous experiment of "holding the truth in unrighteousness," would shudder to see these same seeds of apostacy and reprobation how they spring up, as "the vine of Sodom, whose grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters bitter as death." The priests require between five and six dollars for marrying a couple. Since this is a sum which few of the poorer classes ever possess at one time, scarcely one in ten of these ever marry, but live a life of beastial and ever-shifting concubinage. From these truth has departed, honour is unknown, and honesty is a name. They feel no shame, neither can they blush. Still, they look for life eternal. Of course they have no thought of immediate entrance into heaven, they have not hardihood enough for that, but acknowledge freely the necessity of a purgation by fire; for scarce one in a thousand, according to common estimation, enjoys the singular felicity of immediate admittance to the abodes of the blest. Poor deluded souls! their purgatory, from which no masses will ever redeem, is the hell of Scripture.

In these days of progress and intellectual enlightenment, when young men are entering into the field of Christian effort and Missionary enterprize at an earlier age than was known to their forefathers, it affords us no small pleasure to copy for their benefit the following very valuable remarks which were made the other day at the twelfth annual meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, held in Exeter Hall. And we do it the more especially at this time because one of the characters here spoken of in terms of disapprobation, has been held up to approbation by a public lecturer in this city, and in one of our public papers.—Ed. Protector.

The Rev. J. Graham said that England got credit for being the leader of progress in Europe; and certainly the young men of England, and especially the young men of London, should be the leaders in the van of everything that was good and holy in the progress of the age and of the world. He had to address them on progress: not upon national progress, not upon metropolitan progress, not upon scientific, artistic, or literary progress; not upon military or political progress; but upon that which was not heralded by the trumpets of the world, not lauded by the men of the world, that which was in fact ignored by millions and ridiculed by many, and which, if it existed at all, must go on silently within their souls; he had to address them on spiritual progress. That progress was important to every man; it was bound up with his real self. If a man was not making spiritual progress, he was making no progress that would stand the reflection of a death bed, or that would stand the test of the judgment-day of Christ. He was aware that many young men were endeavouring to make progress, and were making progress, in this busy London; but what kind of progress was it? It was possible for a young man to make progress in learning, in collecting the gains of mammon, in making for himself a character, or in climbing some height of ambition in the present world; but man or time, and showed a man what was the real object of his being? He could point to many who had made progress in this respect; and what had been the estimate of it at last? He could point to an English nobleman that made progress, not in visiting ragged-schools—(hear)—not in promoting city missions, and missions to the heathen, but a nobleman that made wondrous progress in the romance of Greece, and the voluptuousness of Italy; who climbed the height of Parnassus, and drank from its richest and most sparkling fountain; and yet, before the half of ordinary life was passed, what was the testimony of that great nobleman?

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flower, the fruits of love are gone!
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone.

"The fire that on my bosom preys,
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze,
A funeral pile!"

He could point to a man that made political progress, to the great Talleyrand of France; a man that was brought up a priest, that gained a mitre, that turned a republican, that professed himself an infidel, that served fifty years as a great diplomatist in France under five different forms of Government at nearly all the Courts of Europe. What was his testimony to his progress a few years before he died? He wrote it by the lamp of his table, and it was read when he expired: "Eighty-three years of life are spent. What care! What perturbation! What anxiety! What ill will! What sad complications! And now what remains? Nothing but a profound sentiment of discouragement as to the future and disgust as to the past." That was the testimony of a statesman who declared the use of language was to conceal thought, and who acted up to his principle; that was his testimony, when he came to die, of what was the progress he had made. Young men, perhaps, never could advance as far as Byron in poetry and intellectual power; they could never advance as far as Talleyrand in political influence and diplomatic intricacy; and what should be their progress when they come to meet their God? Had they been making a progress that would bear the test of the judgment day? Should "vanity of vanities," should "the worm, the canker, and the grief," should "discouragement as to the future, and disgust as to the past," be all that would remain of their progress when they came to the hour that they must see it in the light of eternal truth? (Hear, hear.) Let him urge young men to make spiritual progress. By spiritual progress he meant progress in the enlightenment, in the tenderness, and in the strength of the conscience. At first the conscience might be weak, and like a bruised reed might bend under the gust of passion and temptation, only to murmur a rebuke when it rose again; but as the young man made spiritual progress, it gained strength, and like the oak could battle with the storm, and get stronger for every victory that it won. Just as the young man's conscience growed strong, he would be able to sacrifice wealth and selfish feelings, to honour God and serve his employer, and thereby serve himself in the best and highest interests. Young men should cultivate conscience; it was a bracing atmosphere in which to live. Progress, also, implied progress in the refinement, the elevation, and the purity of the affections of the heart. It also implied the cultivation of the devotional affections; the strength and joy of the soul were promoted by communion with God. It also implied the cultivation of charity—charity towards young men. Young men might do much for God in the world if they made spiritual progress, and much for their own souls. No man honoured nobility and rank of position more than he did, where they were associated with nobility and rank of mind. He admired rank but he admired nobility of soul still more. Now, young men might reach a knighthood, a baronetage, an earldom, a dukedom, a princedom, and might be made a king and priest under God. They might be more noble "than those of Thessalonica," and they might be so by progressing in conscience, in love, in devoutness, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.