

the Colonial Committee of the Church, and appointments were only made after full inquiry and trial. Many came immediately after receiving license, choosing rather to engage at once in missionary and ministerial work, than hang on at home, perhaps teaching or engaging in some secular work. No doubt, some unworthy men found their way to the country and into the Church; but, we venture to assert that there was no larger proportion of such in the earlier period of the Church than in the more recent. And whatever may be said of those who came to labour in Canada forty or fifty years ago, it may be truly declared that, but for their laborious and self-denying services, often poorly remunerated, the Presbyterian Church would not occupy the position which it occupies in Canada to-day. There may have been less Home Mission machinery, but there was a great deal of real Home Mission work done. In truth, every minister was a home missionary, as well as the pastor of his own more immediate congregation. In the field at one time occupied by one labourer, there may now be found three, four, five, or six ministers. The earlier and older ministers are passing away, but their work remains. Their labours may be lightly regarded by some, — their very names may be forgotten, but the Presbyterians of to-day owe a large debt of gratitude to the worthy fathers who laid the foundations of the goodly fabric which affords a spiritual home for increasing thousands.

THE WALDENSES IN CALABRIA.

AN INTERESTING CHAPTER OF HISTORY.

I have been reading over the various reports presented to the Waldensian Synod, lately held at Torre Pellice, the capital of the Valleys, and find that while progress has been made during the past year, both in the home parishes and in the missions throughout Italy, there is nothing sufficiently important to require special notice at present, seeing I so fully described the work in letters which have already appeared in these pages. I take the opportunity, therefore, of bringing before the readers of this journal a brief account of a colony of Waldenses who settled in Calabria, a district in the extreme southern portion of Italy—long before Reformation days—whose history, in connection with recent discoveries, presents some features worthy of study both by the Church historian and the antiquarian.

About 1370, a large number of men, having sold their small properties and provided themselves with wives from amongst their own people, set out from their native valleys in Piedmont to found a home in Calabria, the most southern part of Italy. A long and weary march of twenty-five days brought them to Montalto, where, after interviews with some of the proprietors they acquired land on favourable terms, and settled down in their adopted country. They formed a colony by themselves, and drew up a regular charter which was afterwards signed by Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples. This document secured to them various rights and privileges, such as the management of their agricultural operations, liberty to constitute themselves independent communities, with their own civil and ecclesiastical government, and having the control of their own self-imposed taxes. They were thus enabled to guard their independence and to maintain their religious opinions without opposition for nearly two centuries.

THE FIRST VILLAGE

they built was called Borgo degli Oltramontani, so named because they had crossed the Apennines in order to reach their new homes. The soil, naturally fertile, required but little labour to make it produce abundantly, and under the careful culture of these hardy mountaineers, the aspect of the country soon became changed. The hills, formerly bare, were now covered with vines, while the valleys yielded abundant harvests, and on the mountains pastured numerous flocks.

Attracted by the favourable reports received from the emigrants, fresh bands left the valleys at different times and settled in the vicinity of their friends, so that there soon rose several villages, such as La Guardia, St. Sixto, Monte Leone, etc., remains of which can still be seen.

The physical appearance of the localities owned by these northerners soon assumed a different aspect from that of the districts where resided the native Calabresi. While the latter remained in ignorance

and superstition and poverty, with badly cultivated lands, the Piedmontese encouraged education as far as practicable, and studied agriculture as well as literature and the sciences. While the

MATERIAL PROSPERITY

of these colonists was all that could be wished, what was their religious condition? Although far from their native country, and surrounded by a Roman Catholic population, they did not renounce the faith of their fathers, nor bow their backs to the Papal yoke. The Roman priests complained that as regards religion they did not live as those about them. None of their young men became priests or monks, and the people did not join in pilgrimages. Their children were taught by men sent from Piedmont, and these instructed the people also in the Scriptures. No public worship, however, was held in any part of the colony, no open protests were made against the errors of Rome, no Christian churches were organized apart from the Catholic parishes. This state of things continued until the Reformation took place in Europe, when the

SYNOD OF CHAMFORANS

was held in the Valley of Angrogna (one of the Vaudois valleys) in 1532, which was attended by a representative from Calabria. Those who read the account of that Synod in one of my letters from the Valleys may remember that it was there decided that worship amongst the Waldenses should no longer remain secret, and that churches and schools should be immediately erected. The news soon reached Calabria, and the colonists, following the example of the Mother Church, also decided openly to profess their faith. In vain they were advised to be cautious. Stefano Negrino was sent from the Valleys to be their pastor, and they requested the Italian Church of Geneva to send them an assistant and an organization for their churches, conformable to that of the Evangelical Churches.

Amongst the students at that time attending the academy at Lausanne was a Piedmontese remarkable for his talents and the fervour of his zeal. His name was

GIOVANNI LUDOVICO PASCHALE,

of an honourable family, who had been destined for a military career. While performing his duties as an officer, at Nice, he heard, for the first time, that faith in Jesus Christ was the means of securing salvation from the guilt and penalty of sin. The novelty of the doctrine arrested his attention and touched his heart, so that he at once began to study the Scriptures, which had then been translated into a language known to him. The result was that he resigned his profession of arms, and went to Geneva, where he associated with many distinguished Reformers who had taken refuge from persecution in that city. He thus became decided to study for the ministry, and left for Lausanne, where there was an academy in which he completed his preparation for the sacred office.

A request for a settled pastor having come from the colonists in Calabria, all agreed that Paschale was just the man to send. As soon as he received the invitation he did not hesitate to accept, notwithstanding the stories about the cruelties of the Inquisition, which had reached him at the same time. Nothing daunted, Paschale set out for his new sphere of labour, accompanied by Marco Uscegli, the Deputy of the Calabrian Churches, with another pastor and two schoolmasters.

Immediately on his arrival he courageously began his work. It was not long before the news spread that a minister from Geneva had arrived, and that

HERETICAL DOCTRINES

were publicly taught. The Marquis Spinello called the principal men of La Guardia and St. Sixto to come to his residence. Paschale accompanied them, hoping to convert the Marquis to tolerance, if not to acquiescence. As soon, however, as he was recognized as a Lutheran pastor, he was seized and conducted to the prison of Foscaldia, along with Uscegli. Taken from one wretched prison to others still worse, placed under the surveillance of a Spanish priest, who continued to ply him incessantly with questions, this bold confessor had scarcely a moment's repose, so that the grief of his heart is said to have exceeded the pain of his body. Not a complaint, however, has been found in the numerous letters which he wrote. He seems to have overlooked his own sufferings in his anxiety about his flock. I have before me several of his letters, which are all full of sentiments of joy that he is deemed

worthy of imprisonment and death for proclaiming the tidings of salvation, and for the maintaining of the honour of such a Captain as Jesus Christ. These letters, written in such circumstances, approach the nearest to those of the Apostles of any I have met with, and at a future time I may translate some of them for THE PRESBYTERIAN.

From Cosenza, Paschale was taken to Naples, and afterwards, on the 16th of May, 1560, he was transferred to

ROME,

entering by the same gate, through which, fourteen centuries before, so many illustrious martyrs had passed. Here, for four months, he lay in a horrid dungeon, subjected to the most cruel tortments, and not being allowed even a little straw to lie on. Still, no complaint escaped him; he even continued to rejoice, and remained firm in resisting every offer made him to recant. At length, on the 9th of September, he was taken to the square in front of the

CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO,

where were erected a scaffold and a stake. All around arose an amphitheatre, supplied with rich couches, on which sat Pope Pius IV. with his Cardinals, Inquisitors, priests and monks, in great numbers. When the prisoner arrived he had the same mild and resigned expression which had distinguished him during his long and cruel confinement. Taking advantage of a moment of silence, Paschale declared to the onlookers that he was about to die for no crime he had committed, but for having dared openly to confess the doctrine taught by his divine Master. On hearing this the Inquisitors gave a signal to the executioner, who at once strangled him. His body was then thrown upon the funeral pile and instantly reduced to ashes, which were thrown into the Tiber. Three months before this the

CHURCHES OF CALABRIA

had been completely destroyed by persecution. The colonists were chained, imprisoned, tortured, burned, and some of them sold for slaves—men, women, and children all suffering alike. The number of victims is stated to have been sixteen hundred. The whole colony was desolated, not a village having escaped. A few persons found their way back to the Valleys of Piedmont—some recanted and remained in Calabria. Gradually the country relapsed into the state of ignorance, poverty, and superstition in which the first colonists had found it, and up to the present time it has remained nearly in the same condition.

THE COLONY VISITED, 1883.

Mr. Pons, the Waldensian pastor at Naples, visited the descendants of this colony in May, 1883, and has since given to the public the result of his observations. I have before me a letter he wrote from Montalto on the 3rd of June, last year, to Professor Trou, at Torre Pellice, who kindly gave it to me, and from it I shall condense a few facts which are of general interest. When he wrote he had only been fifteen days in Calabria, but during that time he had visited many of the villages and had everywhere been well received. His whole stay extended over only three weeks, during which time he sold, by means of a colporteur who accompanied him, fourteen Bibles, twenty-five New Testaments, and 140 portions, besides forty tracts and sixteen copies of "Amici di Casa."

Unfortunately, in that province of Italy, there are at present no means of conveyance from place to place. The roads are few and very bad, which made travelling very fatiguing. There are no inns or lodging houses. The food is bad and cleanliness unknown. All this interfered with his movements and prevented a longer stay except at great risk to his health. Mr. Pons was particularly interested in the

VILLAGE OF LA GUARDIA,

where can still be seen the four walls of the church built by the Vaudois colonists. On a stone over the door are cut these letters; "Congre . . . ca, 1507," which, he thinks were evidently meant for "Congregazione evangelica, 1507." The walls are still called "La Chiesa dell'origine," and "La Chiesa de nostri Padri," i.e., "The Church of our Fathers." Mr. Pons found that the people here understood the dialect still spoken by the peasants in the Valley of Angrogna, in which he himself was brought up. Their affection for him was very touching when they found they could understand each other, and after that they called him "one of their brethren." It appears that, during the winter evenings, the old people have been in the habit