



CATHOLIC CHRONICLE.

VOL. IV.

MONTREAL, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1853.

NO. 6.

MONSIGNOR BEDINI vs. GAVAZZI, BASSI & CO.

The following letter, addressed to the editors of the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, will be read with interest, as showing in its true light the character of the infamous Gavazzi, the companion of the brutal and cowardly cut-throats of the Roman Republic.—Mgr. Bedini is fully cleared from the reproach of having been consenting to the death of Bassi, though as the fellow deserved to die a hundred deaths for his crimes, to have spared the ruffian's life would have been weakness and not mercy:—

Messrs. Editors *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*—An attempt has been made, in various parts of the United States, to cast odium upon the character of the Papal Nuncio to Brazil, Monsignor Bedini, by decrying him, on the authority of P. Gavazzi, as having commanded the degradation and execution, at Bologna, of the notorious Ugo Bassi. According to the fiction, as propagated by Gavazzi, and echoed and exaggerated by a portion of the press of the country, Bassi is depicted as having been a sublime poet, holy priest, and pure minded patriot, the very soul of intellectual refinement, who, sacrificing mundane hopes, devoted himself, with self-denying disinterestedness, as "chaplain" of the "legion" (so Gavazzi's letter in the "Eco d'Italia" styles it) of the "great" Garibaldi, to the cause of Italy's salvation and regeneration. He was pounced upon, for these virtues, by Austrian savages, and dragged before Monsignor Bedini, who ordered him to be scalped and partially skinned, and, finally, within twenty-four hours, to be infamously executed in spite of the entreaties and sympathizing sobs of the very myriads who slaughtered him. He died the hero he had lived, and the last words of the holy martyr were, "Christ and Italy."

No refutation of this pack of inventions is necessary for any one who knows the facts of the case; but falsehood founded in craft, is often perpetuated by prejudice and ignorance, and it is on that account necessary to submit a reliable statement of the case to the public.

Gavazzi asks for respect, in America, as a minister of Christ. His claim to regard, in Italy, in '48-'49, was an avowed enemy of religion, and as one of the most ferocious and brutal ruffians in the horde of Garibaldi. The following well authenticated fact, recorded in the "London Quarterly Review" for October, 1849, and in the "Historisch-Politische Blätter," of April, 1850, will give an idea how he would have been treated, if he had been a good priest, by that murderous banditti:—

"While sitting with a few followers in an 'osteria,' a priest of the parish church of Sta. Maria in Trastevere, was brought before Garibaldi, charged with having abused the Republic. Garibaldi listened to his defence with attention; the poor man alleged that it was true he was a faithful subject of the Pope, but that though he did not love the Republic, he had expressed no opinion on the subject. Garibaldi, with an air of solemnity and gravity that never deserted him, remarked that in a Republic all opinions were freely permitted, and ordered the liberation of the prisoner. Two rank and file escorted him, and when they had arrived at a convenient spot, he was stabbed to the heart, and no one ventured to enquire after the murderer."

While Garibaldi was in Rome, priests were murdered wherever they could be found. Mr. Baillie Cochrane relates, in his "Young Italy," published in 1850:—

"Murders of the blackest and foulest description were hourly committed. I learned that the number of bodies of priests discovered, either buried, or with half the body out of the ground, in the small garden attached to the convent of St. Calisto, could not be reckoned at less than fourteen; some said twelve, while others computed them as high as twenty."

When Mazzini entrusted the defence of Rome to Garibaldi, the inhabitants were struck with utter horror. His entrance into that city is thus described by the writer, in the "London Quarterly Review," quoted above:—

"There poured into Rome from every quarter—Poles, Germans, Lombards, Piedmontese; Tuscans—in a word, Garibaldi. The Romans, instead of having cause to boast of their long defence, should rather blush at it as the last of their degradations. They suffered themselves to be pillaged and slaughtered by hordes of foreign adventurers, who entered the city without their consent, and forced them by threats and blows to help in manning their own walls against an enemy for whose success they were secretly panting."

Garibaldi, whose first appearance with his truculent train of outlaws, the sweepings of all nations, excited the alarm of the citizens and the jealousy of the national guard, had been, to get rid of him for a

time at last, sent to the Abruzzi. He had since lived in this district at free quarters, permitting every excess to his followers and recruiting his forces by the promise of unrestrained license. The dread of him had not diminished among those who had anything to lose at Rome. The day on which he re-entered the capital was warm for the season, and the citizens who flocked to the gate were struck with new terror as they gazed on him and his now augmented banditti—a savage crowd dressed in every variety of costume, the raggedness of their general apparel presenting a grotesque contrast with some rich ornament or article of dress—armed with every description of weapon—women disguised in male attire—bearded cut-throats masquerading as women; some mounted on horses they had stolen, others on asses they had picked up on commons; some seated on cars, carriages, and whatever conveyance they could press into the service—the coach of the Bishop of Rieti bringing up the rear, filled with drunken volunteers, roaring at the top of their voices, and with legs protruded from the windows. No order was attempted in the march—an air of studied confusion and of affected ruffianism was purposely contrived to aid to their naturally wild and forbidding aspect. Many were intoxicated; muskets and pistols were fired in the streets without any regard to the risks incurred, and menaces and curses mingled with songs of ribaldry and blasphemy. The managers of this hideous melo-drama had ordered everything with the view of inspiring terror.

Of these unparalleled desperadoes, whose wanton butcheries fill one of the gloomiest chapters in the history of crime, Ugo Bassi and Gavazzi were chaplains. Something of the fitness of the latter for that office, and of his devotion to the infamies of his associates, may be learned from an Italian work, entitled "La Rivoluzione Romana," published first in 1850, and since then translated, without having called forth a single denial of the facts it relates, into the other languages of Europe.

"The Triumvirs had destined the Convent of St. Silvester in Capite for Garibaldi's Legion. The nuns were still in the house when they came, and the short delay required to pack up their little effects for removal, was a new occasion to these wild borders, of savage coarseness and scoffing. They went out and in among them, reviling, blaspheming, and robbing at pleasure, and the most brutal example of fiendish malice was set the rest by F. Gavazzi, an apostate priest, who caused those nuns that were too sick to move, to be dragged out of their beds, thrust into the street, and thrown into wagons prepared for them."

The "London Quarterly Review," says of this scene:—

"No place of asylum was assigned to them; no preparations had been made for their reception; military billets on the public-house were tauntingly offered to them, when they entreated to be informed whither they were to go. It is not the least disgraceful chapter of this disgraceful history that the cruelty to which these recluses were exposed excited the derision of the crowd that pressed on their sad procession. Without protection and without a determined destination, the timid troop were driven along—the youthful novice about to pronounce her vows, the aged votaress who for fifty years had never strayed beyond the convent garden; tottering, staggering, they looked bewildered around, in hopes of seeing some symptom of pity, some touch of manly feelings; but hard eyes watched, and ribald jeering mocked their prolonged humiliation."

In this instance, however, Gavazzi simply exhibited his character as a low ruffian; but in the following extract from the "Rivoluzione Romana," we find him combining indecency, sacrilege, and hellish cruelty in a manner which has no single parallel in the history of crime:—

"Cruelty was carried so far that the dying were denied opportunity and leisure to turn their thoughts to God. The inspector and chaplain of the military hospitals, Father Gavazzi, taught that the aid of confessors was not requisite in the hour of death; but that to have suffered for the country washed the soul free from every stain, and was title sufficient to salvation. Several good priests sought access to the invalids, but they were driven away, and the sick and wounded surrounded by a crowd of depraved and licentious women, who polluted the very death agonies with which they were struggling. The shameful conduct of these abandoned wretches, compelled the Triumvirs to expel some of them from the hospitals."

Another extract might be given, from the "Historical—Politische Blätter," written by an eyewitness, in which the obtrusion of these debauched creatures upon the dying, is noticed in still more emphatic language.

Yet the demoniac perpetrator of such enormities

is yielded credence to, by some Americans, for the calumnies which he chooses to promulgate against a virtuous and holy Prelate like Monsignor Bedini! And in behalf of whom? Of his "worthy companion and friend" Ugo Bassi! Ugo Bassi, who he says "was not a soldier but a chaplain"—like himself! With what peaceful and christian spirit the duties of "chaplain" were performed by Ugo Bassi, in Garibaldi's service, let impartial readers judge by another extract from "La Rivoluzione Romana."

"At length, after much drinking and noisy talk, one of the band remarked that there must be, thereabouts, Jesuits concealed, and a search instituted under the conduct of Giacomo Giardini, of the Legion Masi. After walking a short distance, they entered the vineyard of a certain Vincenzo Arcangeli, where, in a poor hut, a peasant named Renzaglia, with his wife and two nephews, Joseph Renzaglia and Joseph Cezatelli, resided, who were being then visited by four acquaintances, named Morelli, Sabattucci, Zucchini and Imberti. Several of the robber band surrounded the house, while others rushed in, and without saying a word, hewed around them with their swords, wounding four of the poor countrymen whom they then sent off to the hospital. Giardini ordered the other peasants to be imprisoned, but this, for some reason, did not take place, so that Renzaglia found time, on the following day, to send his wife and children to Frascati. He was on the point of following them, in the evening, when Giardini, with six companions suddenly entered, and perceiving Renzaglia, presented his musket and shot him dead upon the spot. His terrified nephews and Morelli, who had just returned from the hospital, sought safety in flight, but they were taken and bound, and it was agreed upon by Giardini and his associates to take them to Rome and represent them as three Jesuits, whom they had imprisoned for killing two soldiers. As they approached the city, a mob collected, and the defenceless unfortunates were every where assailed with cuts and blows. At length they arrived at the bridge of S. Angelo, when the murderers halted, drew their poignards, and with savage cruelty killed the three innocent men, cut them in pieces, and threw them into the Tiber. The infernal exultation with which the mob greeted this inhuman deed was worthy of tigers. Some were seen boasting holding up pieces of the flesh, which they had cut from the quivering corpse, and others licked the warm blood which trickled from their wounds. To complete the hideous scene came P. Ugo Bassi, who leaping upon the parapet of the bridge, broke forth into curses against the murdered men, commended the murder, and extolled as worthy of benedictions and immortal honor the perpetrators of the crime. All this took place in broad day, before a vast crowd, and went unpunished."

This was on the 3d of May, 1849. Many readers will remember the cry of horror which arose, at the time, from the civilized world on account of these butcheries. Desperate fiends they were indeed, who thus imbued their hands in innocent blood. But what home is deserved by Ugo Bassi? Let it be remembered that he was a Priest, and that he sincerely believed himself to be assisting at the slaughter of his fellow Priests. It is enough to say that he was a chaplain in the band of Garibaldi, and the worthy companion of Gavazzi.

Yet this is the mild, angelic martyr for whom our tears are asked by those who would, if they dared, commit the very same crimes in this country and in this city! This is not said unadvisedly. A month ago, on the 4th of August, the following significant words appeared in the *Wisconsin Banner*:—

"A demonstration was thought of against M. Bedini. We are glad it did not take place. Bedini is not here as a Pfaff or private individual, but as the Ambassador of a Prince.—The now existing laws of nations protect him. . . . His person must not be endangered. But other times are coming."

A brutal insinuation that if he had been here as a private individual, he might have been mobbed, and that theme will come when unpopular Ambassadors may be mobbed also. When will Americans learn that the lowest savages have higher ideas of freedom than these red republican anarchists, who preach crime under the holy name of liberty!

At length the French conquered Rome, and the banditti, with whom they refused to make terms, left it. The reign of terror came to an end, and Garibaldi went out of the gates with his robber band, and chaplains, though not until a large sum of money had been paid them to prevent their plundering the city, they had come to save (!), although they had already muled it of over half a million of dollars. If necessary, we can trace, at another time, the adventurous way of those pillaging, murdering outlaws, from the time they sought refuge in the mountains, until their final dispersion. They lived by plunder,

filling the country with terror through which they passed, and their course was what might have been expected from men in their desperate condition. They succeeded in foiling their French pursuers, threading the Apennines from Tivoli to Terni, from Terni to Arezzo, evading the Austrian lines, and finally reached the Adriatic. Garibaldi himself escaped to Venice. Many were killed, but few were captured. Among the number, however, was Ugo Bassi.

Ugo Bassi was dressed, when taken, in military uniform, and declared himself to be an officer in Garibaldi's corps. As such, he was treated. Monsignor Bedini, was, at the time, Papal Commissioner at Bologna; but his influence had been so often used in favor of misguided men, who had made themselves liable to punishment, that the Austrian General, Count Gortzkowski, feared that his interference might also save the life of his prisoner. He therefore called on Monsignor Bedini, and kept him engaged in conversation, during a brief respite granted to Bassi to prepare for death, and succeeded, in fact, in keeping the Prelate ignorant of what was going on, until the execution had taken place.

Gavazzi's lie, concerning Bassi's death, may be made manifest to any enquirer, by the blundering ignorance of his own statement.—He relates that the skin was taken off from the head and hands of Bassi, at the time of his degradation. Now, the merest tyro in the rites of the Roman Church, is aware that only those parts of the body are "scraped of the skin," in the ceremony of degradation, which had received ecclesiastical unction; and that Bishops are the only ecclesiastical functionaries anointed on the head. Degraded Priests have the skin scraped, on the thumb and forefingers, but never from the head. Bassi was not degraded at all, and, if such had been the case, the only Prelate who had power to order the ceremony, would have been the Archbishop of Bologna, Cardinal Oppizoni, not Monsignor Bedini.

It may be subjoined that the account given of Bassi's death, representing him as dying an enemy of the Catholic Church, is wholly false. His last words were not "Christ and Italy." He used the short time granted him before his execution, to receive the assistance of a Priest, and the consolation of religion. He three times confessed his sins to the ecclesiastical who assisted him in his last hours, retracted his errors, expressed his deep and humble sorrow for the scandals he had given, and the crimes he had committed, and his last words, according to the "Rivoluzione Romana," were an appeal to the Virgin Mary for her intercessions in behalf of his poor soul.

With regard to Bologna, the following passage from a Review, in the "London Quarterly" of Jan. 1852, of "Farini's History of the Roman States," will show the state of the city when Monsignor Bedini went there.

"The town was in the hands of the populace—arbitrary taxes were imposed at the will of the demagogues—robbery was rife on the highways—judges, policemen, and turnkeys were butchered in cold blood—all that were obnoxious to the dominant party, that is all the ministers and agents of justice, were exposed to a horrible persecution—sick men were stabbed in their beds in the presence of their wives and children, and their corpses left unburied in the streets. The brigands each selected his victim and shot him down, and if any signs of life remained, the murderer coolly re-loaded his musket and despatched him in sight of the people and of the soldiers. They hunted men down like wild beasts, entered their houses, and dragged them forth to slaughter! I saw it, saw death dealt about, and the abominable chase."

Long before Rome was subdued, the state of the place was so changed that it was the very first city to send entreaties to the Pope that he would leave Gaeta and trust himself to that devotion of the inhabitants of that Legation. The wise and prudent administration of Archbishop Bedini, by whom their faith and loyalty were rallied, is remembered with gratitude at the present day, and every Italian traveller knows that the friendly mention of his name, illumines at the present hour, with a smile of pleasure the countenance of each citizen of Bologna.

AN ANCIENT EXPOSITION OF THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

St. Thomas Aquin (2, 2 p., q. 169, a. III) discusses this question:—"Is the use of wine altogether unlawful?" Although, perhaps, not anticipating that six hundred years from his time the fanatics of an enlightened age would take the affirmative side of this question, he has confuted, in advance, all these arguments. These arguments he presents in the following terse and clear form:—

1. No man can be in a state of salvation, who has not wisdom; for (Sap. VII) it is said, "God loves no one, but him who liveth with wisdom." Now, the