

## Political and General Miscellany.

### WILL IS POWER.

How frequently we hear doubts expressed as to the possibility of acquiring knowledge without assistance!

One morning in the year 1849, a young peasant girl obtained an interview with the great vicar of the cathedral of one of the western cities in France. In a manner that was at once modest and firm, she told him that having heard of his kindness in procuring situations for governesses, she had come in the hope of obtaining some employment.

"But my child," replied the venerable abbe, "you cannot teach without a diploma, and in order to obtain a diploma, you must go through an examination. What instruction have you received?" "In my childhood, Mons.<sup>r</sup> l'Abbe, I learned to read and write, and then I served my apprenticeship to a mantuamaker. I am now constantly employed in working with my needle, and earn about three pence; but this does not do, and so I wish to become a governess."

"My poor child, to read and write is something, it is true; but it is not enough. You must know how to spell; and you must know grammar, geography and something more than the first four rules of arithmetic, all thoroughly; and you must also have some idea of composition."

"I think, Monsieur l'Abbe, that I could pass an examination in these things tolerably well; for when my day's work was over, I have always devoted part of the night to studying the books which I contrived to buy out of my savings. On Sundays, too, I could read. I have come on purpose to beg that you would be so good as to examine me, and tell me whether I may hope to obtain the diploma of the first degree."

"The first degree! but do you know what it is, my child? it would be impossible. The examination is very difficult; you must know arithmetic perfectly; also, something of geometry and cosmography; you must understand music, both singing and playing on an instrument. It is not likely you have learned the piano or the harp?"

"I have not; but Monsieur l'Abbe, does the law say positively the piano or the harp?"

"No! the law says that it is necessary to know enough of music to be able to play on an instrument. Those I mentioned are most usually learned at schools, that is the reason I named them; but I think that perhaps they might be satisfied, with the guitar."

"Well, Monsieur as the law does not name any particular instrument, I am satisfied, for I have taught myself to play on one instrument."

"And what is that?"

"Here it is;" and the girl took from her pocket a flageolet.

At this sight the Abbe burst into a peal of laughter. She colored deeply; but imagining, no doubt, that he did not believe in her musical powers, she raised the instrument to her lips and the Abbe stood amazed.

The excellent priest, who had himself been of the people, judged rightly that a peasant, who had taught herself not only to play, but to play so well, could not be an ordinary person. He asked her age. She was twenty-five.

"I will examine you now," he said.

The replies of the young peasant were astonishing; and he wondered but in silence, at the knowledge which this poor country dressmaker had obtained by her own unaided efforts.

"You may," he said, "with perfect confidence present yourself before the commission of examiners; I will arrange that you shall not be required to play. This flageolet, on which you perform so well, would excite laughter and witticism, which must be avoided."

The young peasant went before the Commissioners, and all were amazed at the variety of real and profound knowledge which she had acquired in her evenings, and pondered on during her long days of toil. Received by acclamation, she now (December, 1850) is at the head of an establishment.

We have heard this story related both by the grand vicar, and by a lady, the intimate friend of our heroine, who has often heard her say to her pupils—"WILL IS POWER."

### GREAT CITIES; WHAT ARE THEY TO BE?

The growth of cities is one of those "signs of the times" which deserve the study of thoughtful Christians.

In our country this growth has been singularly rapid. The census show that the law of decimal increase of population is some thirty-four per cent.; but, in the last thirty years, New York city has increased five hundred per cent.; Philadelphia, four hundred; New Orleans, three hundred and fifty; Cincinnati, sixteen hundred; St. Louis, eighteen hundred; Chicago, San Francisco, and other new cities, four thousand. During the last ten years, the growth of population in most of the old states of the Union, has been in the city class, the rural population having, in very many sections, diminished.

In Europe, the same remarkable growth of cities appears. In fifty years, Paris has added to its population three quarters of a million; London, a million and a half. Similar additions have been made to Vienna and Berlin, on the continent, and to Glasgow, Manchester, and Liverpool, in Britain.

The social tendency of the age is unquestionably to concentration in cities. Within the area of London, one-ninth of the whole population of England is gathered. Paris contains one-thirtieth, and Vienna, one-nineteenth, of the many millions crowding the two great empires of France and Austria. Philadelphia has one-fifth of the population of Pennsylvania; and New York city one-sixth of the population of New York state. St. Louis is to the great state of Missouri as one to seven; and Cincinnati to Ohio, as one to twelve.

Meeting, then, the question, What are great cities to be? we answer:

1. They are to be greater aggregations of men, women, and children,—immortal souls pressing through time to eternity—than the world has ever seen. The *clius* of antiquity are already surpassed in populousness by some of the leading cities of our times. We notice that the sewerage commissioners of London, in view of the probable necessities of that city are already projecting a drainage for six millions of inhabitants, its estimated population in fifty years, if the present ratio of increase be not lessened. And in fifty years who shall undertake to estimate the population of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco?

2. Great cities are to be greater centers of wealth than their history has ever yet shown. It is said that there is one acre of ground in London which pays the interest on a long lease, of four millions of dollars. It is conceded that the wealth of Rome, in its best days, was much below the present wealth of the British metropolis. What, then, will be the wealth of cities, when upon our own continent there