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THE WALDENSES.

COLLEGE OF LA TOUR—PRESBYTERIANISM OF THE VAUDOIS.

If your readers feel as much interested in the history of the valleys of Piedmont as I do, they will desire with me to obtain some information in your pages regarding the present state of the Waldenses, their position in regard to the government under which they live, and the best means which may be used by the liberality of British Christians, to improve their condition. It is well known that these interesting people live under the government of the king of Sardinia, or of the two Sicilies; and it may be easily conceived that an administration despotic in its essential character, and influenced in its every movement by a bigotted priesthood, will confer on the poor protestants of the Vaudois as few privileges as possible. I am informed that the reigning monarch, whose name, if I mistake not, is Charles Albert, is *not* a persecutor nor a tyrant *in himself*. He is respected as a person of mild manners; of liberal views; and of a most tolerant disposition. His Council of State also are said to consist of men who accord with him in sentiment, and who are very much disposed to relax the laws in favour of the Vaudois, and to extend to them the same civil privileges as to the other classes of His Majesty's subjects. What, then, may be the reason why these interesting classes of his subjects are still kept under the chains of tyrannical sway, and exposed perpetually to intolerant insults? The reason is to be found in the wretched system of Romish priesthood under which the country groans, and the yoke

of which neither the king nor his cabinet have the courage to throw off their necks. Indeed, it is this horrid control of the system of popery in all the Roman Catholic countries in Europe, that has hitherto arrested the progress of liberal principles, and interfered so glaringly with the essential rights of free men.

It is well known that in 1794, when the French first invaded Piedmont, down to 1815, when the old regime was set up again in France, and in most other countries of the continent, the Vaudois enjoyed a considerable portion of civil freedom, and but little or no distinction was practically kept up betwixt them and the popish inhabitants, on account of their religious professions. But so soon as the King of the two Sicilies was restored to his throne, the old laws which encouraged persecution for conscience' sake were revived, and the civil privileges which had been enjoyed by the Vaudois were at once taken away from them. In consequence of this, these meritorious people have for the last twenty years been subjected to many privations, and have been reduced to extreme depression and poverty. Greatly to the credit of His Majesty the present King of Prussia, the refugees of Piedmont were invited to settle in his dominions, and put in possession of all the privileges which his own subjects enjoyed. It is curious to notice the varieties in human character. Frederick has within these very few years been banishing a goodly number of his own subjects who did not "take with "