

to take refuge in foreign countries. A few of these wanderers penetrated as far as Provence and Languedoc, and from them were derived the Albigenses, or heretics of Albi. The province of Guienne afforded shelter to the persecuted Albigenses. Guienne was then in your possession. From an English province our doctrines found their way into England itself, and your Wickliffe<sup>f</sup> preached nothing more than what had been advanced by the ministers of our valleys, four hundred years before his time." "Whence," continued my aged informant, with increased animation, "came your term *Lollards*<sup>g</sup>, but from a Waldensian Pastor, Walter Lollard, who flourished about the middle of the thirteenth century," and the Walloons of the Low Countries were nothing more than a sect, whose name is easily found in the corruption of our own. As for ourselves, we have been called heretics, and Arians, and Manicheans, and Cathari, but we are like yourselves, a Church built up in Christ, a Church with the discipline and regular administration of divine service which constitutes a Church<sup>h</sup>. We have adhered to the pure

<sup>f</sup> Thomas Walden, who wrote against the doctrine of Wickliffe, says, "C'est la doctrine des Vaudois, qui s'étoit glissée des quartiers de France," &c.

Cardinal Bellarmine bears the same testimony: "Wicliff n'a pas pu enrichir la doctrine des Vaudois."—LEGER, p. 176.

<sup>g</sup> Mr. Southey, in his "Book of the Church," has followed erroneous authority in his observations upon the Lollards, as far as the derivation of their name goes. Speaking of Wickliffe, he says, "His proselytes became very numerous, and obtained the name of Lollards, which had been given in the Low Countries to the persecuted Franciscans, and other enthusiasts, from their practice of singing hymns, *lollen*, or *lullen*, in one of the old German dialects, signifying to sing, as a mother sings when she lulls her babe." Vol. I. p. 344. In the Appendix, No. 13, the name of Lollard will be found among those of distinguished Waldensian *Barbes* or Pastors.

<sup>h</sup> See ancient Catechism of the Waldenses, given by Morland, p. 79.

"Q. Wherefore dost thou know the Church of Christ?

"A. By the Ministers lawfully called, and by the people participating in truth of the Ministry."

tenets of the Apostolic age, and the Roman Catholics have separated from us. Ours is the Apostolical succession, from which the Roman hierarchy has departed, rather than ourselves. We are not only a Church by name and outward forms, but a Church actually interested by faith in Jesus Christ the corner stone."

M. Peyrani then went to his book-shelves, and produced the evidence of Leger to prove the correctness of his assertions, and turned to the chapter in which the author, having devoted five long folio pages to the discussion, thus sums up his arguments. "Cette doctrine Vaudoise se trouvant donc suffisamment justifiée par les Lutheriens, aussi bien que par les Calvinistes, et même par les Papistes, et par eus tous reconnué si éloignée des sentimens Heretiques, et des Manichéens, et des Ariens, et des Cathares, il ne sera pas necessaire que je m'y estende d'avantage !."

I ventured to ask M. Peyrani if the Vaudois clergy urged the doctrine of absolute predestination and election. He replied that these nice points of controversy were not often discussed in their pulpits, and that for his own part, he had never given his assent to the belief in absolute predestination. "If God infallibly saves some, and as infallibly rejects others, I do not see what is the use of his laws," was one of his remarks.

I mentioned Calvin. "Calvin," said he, "was a good man, I am inclined to think, though I cannot account for his judicial murder of Servetus. He desired to be thought a faithful servant of God, but many of his tenets convey a strange notion of the Almighty's attributes."

I also took the liberty of observing to M. Peyrani, that the close intercourse between the Vaudois students and candidates

for holy orders, and the ministers of the Genevan Church rendered it an object of apprehension, lest they might become tainted with the Socinian infection of Geneva. He rejected the idea with considerable energy, assured me that the doctrine of the Trinity<sup>k</sup> was still preserved in all its purity by the whole of his community, and shewed me an old Catechism, which he trusted would always form the basis of their belief. Some few of the questions and answers on this head are very simple.

"You say, that you believe God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost to be three persons. You have three Gods then?"

"No, I have not three."

"But you have named three."

"Yes, as far as relates to the distinction of the persons, but not in regard to the essence of the Divinity."—"Ma non per rason de la essentia de la Divinità," are the words in the ancient language of the Vaudois.

Upon a question as to the learning and acquirements of the Vaudois clergy, M. Peyrani lamented that, not being able to finish their education at home, the youth, who were intended for holy orders, were obliged to submit to the inconvenience and expence of going to the college of Lausanne, in Switzerland, but said that they returned in general well stored with scholastic and useful information. His own son, he said, would shortly go there, if he could raise the funds necessary to support the charges of so distant a journey.

Talking of the present and late government of Piemont, the

<sup>k</sup> "It deserves to be noticed that in their exposition of the Apostles' Creed the Waldensian reformers give us that well known text in 1 John v, 7., as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. They were, it seems, perfectly satisfied of its authenticity, and most probably at that time had never heard of any suggestion to the contrary."—MILNER.

good old moderator drew no comparisons to the disadvantage of the former, but only remarked that Napoleon had done the poor Protestants good and harm : good, in that he had placed them upon a footing with the Catholics, and equalized their condition in the state with the rest of the subjects of the empire ; and harm, in that the privileges then extended to them only served now to make them more sensible of their present grievances. This subject led to the audience which M. Peyrani had with the late Emperor of France, when he formed part of a deputation who were charged with an address to him.

Buonaparte noticed M. Peyrani immediately, and accosted him in a style of unusual condescension, and even respect.

*N.* You are one of the Protestant clergy ?

*P.* Yes, Sire, and the moderator of the Vaudois Church.

*N.* You are schismatics from the Roman Church ?

*P.* Not schismatics, I hope, but separatists from scruples of conscience, on grounds that we consider to be Scriptural.

*N.* You have had some brave men among you. But your mountains are the best ramparts you can have. Cæsar found some trouble in passing your defiles with five legions. Is Arnaud's *La Rentrée Glorieuse* correct ?

*P.* Yes, Sire, believing our people to have been assisted by Providence.

*N.* How long have you formed an independent Church ?

*P.* Since the time of Claude, Bishop of Turin, about the year 820.

*N.* What stipend have your Clergy ?

*P.* We cannot be said to have any fixed stipend at present.

*N.* You used to have a pension from England ?

*P.* Yes, Sire, the kings of Great Britain were always our benefactors and protectors till lately. The royal pension is now withheld, because we are your majesty's subjects.



*N.* Are you organized ?

*P.* No, Sire.

*N.* Draw out a memorial, and send it to Paris. You shall be organized immediately.

In consequence of the emperor's order, the Vaudois clergy were enrolled with the clergy of the empire, and lands were allotted for their provision, which yielded 1000 francs yearly to each of the parochial pastors ; and in addition to this maintenance, 200 francs a-year were paid to them from the treasury, for forwarding annually to the government certain copies of registers, and population returns. At the restoration of his Sardinian Majesty they were deprived of both these payments, and in failure of these resources, the families of several of the pastors were reduced for a time to such extreme necessity, as to depend upon the charity of their neighbours for subsistence. The sufferings of one of the Clergy, and his seven children, were such as the veriest pauper in England does not experience, and to every stranger who visits the valleys, the name of Alexander Rostain, Pastor of Ville-seche, or Villa-secca, in the Valley of San Martino, is mentioned as that of a Minister, who has faithfully discharged his duty as a parochial Clergyman, and Secretary of the Synod, in spite of trials severe enough to bend the firmest mind.

*M.* Rostain's parish consists of the two villages of Ville-seche, or Villa-secca and San Martino, and the hamlets of Faetto, Richaretto, Bovilla, and Traversa. He has more Catholics in his parish than in any other, which not only exposes him to more vexatious proceedings of every sort, but renders the number of those who would contribute to his occasional assistance still less. The principal villages are on the north-side of the Germanasca torrent ; but Faetto and Richaretto are situated on the southern side : all are detached from each other, and many of the cottages are perched upon the brows of the mountains.

This will give a pretty good idea of the arduous duties this exemplary pastor has to perform, of his difficulty in visiting the greater proportion of his flock during the inclement seasons, and the fatigue of moving from one hamlet to another, when his poverty, and the nature of the country, oblige him to go on foot. In the winter, he is often in danger of perishing of cold, of being lost in the snow, or carried away by those terrible avalanches and inundations, which are not uncommon in this mountainous region; and in the summer his labours are almost endless, from having to preach upon the mountains, to part of his flock, who leave the valleys, and take up their residence in their châteaux, as long as they can find pasturage for their cattle. In fact, none but those who have been among them, can imagine what are the toils and deprivations of the Vaudois clergy; not one of whom has a population to attend to of less than seven or eight hundred; and these, from the sterility of the soil, spread over a great extent of mountain and valley not easy of access.

In consequence of the urgent application of the Prussian and Belgian ministers, the king was, after a while, persuaded to take into consideration the very distressed state of these exemplary men, and to allow them a pension of 500 francs each. There is also a small charge upon each commune, varying from 100 francs to 140 francs, towards their maintenance: the Dutch government allows 100 francs yearly to each of the two senior pastors, and 75 francs each to three who are next in age, and the pension of about 300 francs annually to every one of the thirteen clergy, from the national grant<sup>k</sup> of 1768, is now regularly received from

<sup>k</sup> " VAUDOIS CLERGY.

" In the year 1768, His Majesty was graciously pleased to grant his Royal Letters Patent, in favor of the Protestants of the Vaudois Churches, in the valleys of Piedmont, to empower them to solicit the contributions of well-disposed persons, to enable them to maintain the Ministers, Churches, Schools, and Poor, which

England. Thus 1040 francs a-year, with the use of the presbytery, or parsonage-house, is the utmost fixed and certain income, upon which any of these poor ministers have to depend. They have no fees for burials, baptisms, or marriages; nor have they any allowance made on account of the annual registers or returns, for which the French government paid them additionally 200 francs yearly.

If it were not for the occasional bounty which they receive from Switzerland, Prussia, and the Netherlands, it would be impossible for the ministerial office to be supplied. The former contributes 600 francs towards the annual support of four students at Lausanne; and in 1820, the sum of 4650 francs was remitted from Holland in aid of the schools, and widows of the clergy. The King of Prussia is said to have lately presented 10,000 francs towards the general support of the schools, clergy, and widows of clergy; and the Emperor of Russia has given the same sum in aid of a new hospital, which is to be built at La Torre.

Of all their benefactors, the Vaudois are most indebted to the

they were not able to support in any tolerable manner.' His Majesty was also pleased to direct, that the amount of this charitable collection should be paid into the hands of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and be by them invested in government securities, the interest of which should be appropriated to the religious uses of the Protestant inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont. In obedience to these directions, the Treasurer was empowered to receive the contributions, and carry into effect the gracious designs of His Majesty; since which period, annual stipends have been regularly paid to thirteen Pastors of the valleys of Piedmont, independently of certain small allowances to the widows of the deceased Ministers. By the accumulation of the excess of interest, and other gratuities, the capital sum has been raised to 10,000*l.* 3 per cent. bank annuities, which has enabled the Society to extend the gross amount of the salaries to 292*l.* per annum, for which sum the thirteen Pastors draw upon the Treasurer."—See Abstract of the proceedings of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

Prussian Ambassador at Turin, the Count Truchess<sup>1</sup>, who is incessant in his endeavours to serve them ; and whenever opportunity and zeal can avail, he is sure to succeed. I was informed of one kind office which he did, which will not soon be eradicated from the memory of the individual whom he relieved from his embarrassment ; or of the little flock, whose minister he restored to them. Among other laws in their favour, enacted by the French government, which the King of Sardinia repealed at his restoration in 1814, was that which rendered the Protestants capable of enjoying public employment, and of rising to rank in the army. The royal edict of May 21, 1814, reduced them to all the degradations to which they had been obliged to submit in former times. They cannot rise in civil employment ; they cannot practise in the learned professions ; and they cannot be promoted to the rank of commissioned officers : but all are liable to serve as common soldiers, and none are exempt from military conscription ; not even the clergy. M. Peyrot, the pastor of Rora, was drawn in the conscription of 1821 : in vain he urged his sacred character, and pastoral duties. His remonstrances were of no

<sup>1</sup> In a letter, which I have lately received from one of my Vaudois correspondents, I found the following grateful acknowledgment of this excellent nobleman's attention to the interest of a people, who stand so much in need of protection. "The very worthy count, General de Truchess, the Prussian Ambassador, employs all his great influence in favour of the Vaudois, who, since the Stewarts and Trevors, have never had so powerful a protector. He has obtained a very liberal subscription from the Emperor of Russia, for an hospital for the Vaudois, which is forwarding rapidly. The ground for the house, the garden, and vigne, are already purchased, at the distance of about half a mile from La Torre, on the road to the church. If you can insert in your book the gratitude of the Vaudois to this generous protector, and to the Emperor of Russia, you will greatly oblige us."

It is a melancholy task to have to add, that serious doubts are entertained whether this excellent work can be brought to a completion. The funds for the erection and support of the hospital must be materially increased by liberal contributions from abroad, or the design will fail.

use; he was too poor to purchase a substitute, and orders of a most peremptory nature arrived for his joining his regiment, as a private soldier, immediately. The interposition of Count Truchess was prayed for, and obtained. M. Peyrot was released, not as a clergyman, but with a pretended understanding, on the part of the war-office, that he was beyond the age prescribed for military service.

M. Peyrani himself, and afterwards M. Bert, the pastor of La Torre, searched all their accounts in my presence, to see what succours had been rendered to the Vaudois on the part of England, independent of the pension arising from the national grant. Every benefaction and service is carefully recorded in books kept by the moderator, the moderator adjoint, and the secretary: but some Bibles from the Bible Society, some books from a few generous individuals, and two hundred pounds from the Baptist Society, were all that appeared under the head of British bounty.

Of the royal pension, to which Napoleon alluded in his conference with M. Peyrani, no part whatever has been received since the year 1797: it was suppressed by the British government when Piedmont became subject to France, and has not been restored with the legitimate dynasty. This pension proceeded, if I have been rightly informed, from a grant of William and Mary, encreased by a bequest of Queen Mary.

The hardship of being deprived of a pension, amounting to 400 francs a-year, which had been enjoyed for more than a hundred years, is rendered the more insupportable, because it is considered a right rather than a benefaction, and claimable upon every principle of equity. I was shewn, by M. Peyrani, a copy of an order in council, held at Westminster, under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, a transcript of which is in the hands of almost every pastor in the three valleys; and, upon the strength of which, they partly found their claim to the pension

in question. The collection alluded to, amounted to more than 38,000*l.* of which upwards of 16,000*l.* was put out to interest.

“ Rapport ayant esté fait a Monsieur le Commissaire par le comitè des affaires des pauvres Eglises des Vallées de Piemont, qu'ils avoient esté bien informés par Monsieur Morland de l'état des dites Vallées, &c. il a esté arrêté que l'argent qui reste de la collecte faite pour elles, sera employé comme s'ensuit pour un établissement ferme et ordinaire à l'avenir.

“ A Monsieur Jean Leger, Modérateur, qui a toujourns agi des Vallées, 100 livres sterlins.

“ A huit Ministres demeurans sur les terres du Duc de Savoy 320 livres, sterlins.

“ A trois Ministres demeurans sur terre de France en val Peyrouse, 30 livres sterlins.

“ Au Maître d'Ecole générale, 20 livres sterlins.

“ A dix Maîtres d'Ecoles particulieres, 60 livres sterlins.

“ A trois Maîtres d'Ecole en Val Perouse, 9 livres sterlins.

“ A quatre Etudians en Theologie, ou en Médecine, 40 livres sterlins.

“ Au Médecin, 20 livres sterlins.

“ Au Chirurgien, 10 livres sterlins.

“ En tout annuellement, 609 livres sterlins.

“ Signé. SCOBELL. CLERC DU CONSEIL.”

According to Morland's account, the collection amounted to 38,241*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* ; and of this, 9501*l.* 16*s.* 3*d.* was immediately disposed of in remitting sums of money, bedding, linen, and provisions, to the distressed sufferers, in the course of the year 1655. A commission was appointed for the management of the rest ; and, in the course of the two following years, 12,550*l.* was distributed in the three valleys. There then remained upwards of 16,000*l.* ; of which Morland, who was himself the principal commissioner, speaks thus, (p. 596.) “ As for the monies that yet

remain in the hands of the treasurers, the good people of this nation are desired to believe, that it hath hitherto been his highness's exceeding great care, that no part of the collected monies might be distributed or delivered, but by the advice, and through the hands, of persons of known honour and fidelity: so likewise it shall be his constant endeavour, that what yet remains, shall be improved for the best advantage of those for whom it was solely intended. For which end and purpose his highness, after mature consultation with his commissioners at home, and his public ministers abroad, hath already caused some part thereof to be put out to interest in sure hands, (but so that it may be called in upon urgent occasion); and for the future will take such resolutions, as the necessities of these poor people, and the circumstances of their condition, shall require."

It is manifest from the agreement of these two accounts, the one of which is to be found in Leger's, and the other in Morland's History, that a permanent fund was raised, during the protectorate, for the annual relief of the Vaudois.

It is little to the credit of Charles the Second, that he sequestered, or rather abolished, this fund; and that all the pathetic appeals, and pressing remonstrances, of the poor Vaudois, could not persuade him to restore it. His only answer was, "that he did not consider himself bound by any of the engagements of an usurper and tyrant, nor responsible for his debts."

James the Second could not be expected to pay any attention to the claims of Protestants; but William and Mary restored the pension, or at least established a new one, and were the constant friends of this oppressed community. King William gave the celebrated Henri Arnaud the commission of colonel in one of his own regiments. The commission itself, dated May 14, 1691, signed "William," and counter-signed "Nottingham," is still preserved in the family of Appia, at La Torre.



It was with extreme regret we witnessed the approach of the hour, which told us we must take leave of the venerable Peyrani. The good-humour, cheerfulness, and resignation of the old man, his perfect recollection of events and conversations which took place years ago, his profound erudition and general information, lent a deep and peculiar interest to his discourse. My young companions were riveted with attention. He appeared to them like a being of a different order to what they had been used to see: all that they heard and saw had more the air of romance than reality. The little window of the room opened upon the wild mountain scenery of Pomaretto; the roar of the distant torrents was heard through the casement; and the impression of the whole scene was so much the greater from the contrast between the elevated character of the noble old man, and the circumstances in which he was placed. Poverty within, and desolation without, formed a dark and striking back-ground to the portrait of the philosophic minister, whose lips teemed with eloquence, and whose mind was stored with all the riches of the most intellectual society. The looks of my friends, as they wandered from the window to the moderator, sufficiently told me what was passing within their breasts; and they did not escape the notice of M. Vertu, who watched with an enquiring eye, to observe what impression the aged moderator of his church would make upon the strangers. Holding him in the utmost reverence himself, he was all anxiety that we should do the same; and could not disguise his feelings of delight at every mark of respect, which we paid to the sacred representative of this primitive Christian community.

Before we parted, I looked several times earnestly round the room, that I might carry away with me every possible recollection of the chamber in which Rodolphe Peyrani was likely to finish his days. The ordinary and antique furniture, and the prints

which hung upon the walls, were all objects of interest ; and some of them illustrated the character of the man. In the centre, and directly over the fire-place, was the moderator's diploma, presented to him by the Royal Academy of Turin. On one side of the diploma was George the Fourth, taken when he was Prince of Wales : on the other, the King of Sardinia ; for no sufferings or injustice done to him, could efface the loyal principles of M. Peyrani. Several Kings of Prussia, Isaac Newton, Luther, and Calvin, occupied another place ; and the Duke of Wellington, and Lord William Bentinck, were in a very conspicuous situation. The good man pointed to the latter, and spoke of him with much gratitude. " If any thing could have been done for the Vaudois, Lord William would have effected it," he said ; " but the restored king was deaf even to his intercessions."

The British general naturally conceived that he, who had been instrumental in re-placing his Majesty upon the throne of his ancestors, had some pretensions to be heard in favour of subjects, who professed the same religion as his own sovereign and himself. He took the earliest opportunity of urging their suit ; and at Genoa, before the king could even set foot in the hereditary dominions to which the British arms had restored him, and while he was yet under the protection of a British escort, Lord William Bentinck most earnestly pleaded for the oppressed churches of the valleys. The king listened to the eloquent and feeling appeal with worse than indifference. His determination, most probably, was already made ; for in four days afterwards, and on the morning after he had taken possession of his palace at Turin, the ungrateful monarch issued an edict, by which he dispossessed the Vaudois of all that they had enjoyed during his dethronement ; and put many vexatious decrees in force, which had been proclaimed against them by his bigoted and intolerant predecessors.

Victor Emanuel, the late king, is but just gathered to his fa-

thers. The Vaudois never speak with any bitterness even of those, who have used them the most unfairly ; and his death was announced to me by one of my friends in the valleys, with an observation which does honour to the kindness of his heart. “ On ne lui a connu d'autre défaut, que d'être trop bon et trop crédule, de sorte que tous avoient raison, mais plus particulièrement le dernier venu.”

As M. Peyrani followed us feebly down stairs, he shewed us the door of an apartment which had never been opened, he told us, since the day on which his brother had been carried out of it, to be consigned to the grave. I asked what brother, and the answer was a momentary shock. It was Ferdinand Peyrani, the pastor of Pramol. It was like hearing the knell of a dear friend. Ferdinand Peyrani was the first person who interested me in the history of the Vaudois. It was his letter, addressed to the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, which directed my attention to them, and occasioned this excursion to their Alpine retreats. He was one of the pastors to whom I felt so anxious to be introduced, and this was the first news of his being no more. His death was hastened by the scurvy, a disorder increased by poverty and want.

At the door of his humble presbytery the aged moderator wrung our hands, and said farewell with every symptom of regret at parting. He stood at the threshold, watching our departing steps, and the last sight that I had of his long grey locks, floating in the wind, left an impression that will not soon be removed. I think it is Johnson who says, that we can rarely see anybody, and part with him, under the belief that we are never to meet again, without some emotion. I am sure nobody could take leave, as we did, of M. Peyrani, with the certainty of seeing him no more, without being sensibly affected. His son accompanied us to the edge of the torrent, and there we said adieu to him.

Such was our visit to the successor of the bishops of the purest Church in Italy, whose necessities were such, that we felt bound, by a sacred sense of duty, to run the hazard of wounding those feelings of pride, which every man of sensibility must retain, even amid the most urgent poverty, by pressing upon his acceptance a heart offering for the purchase of a few of those comforts, which his age and infirmities required. I have had many struggles, before I could make up my mind as to the propriety of stating this circumstance, and nothing could have induced me to do it, but the persuasion that it will put the case in the strongest light, and shew at once the deplorable situation to which many of these excellent pastors are reduced. He could not have presumed to proffer, nor would the venerable moderator have condescended to accept the assistance of private individuals like ourselves, if it had not been a very timely succour : and certainly the circumstance never could have appeared in print, but with the object of drawing attention to the wants of a people, who have been too much overlooked by those who have the means of aiding them.

Who knows but, as the flood of time rolls on, some successor of the primate of England may be reduced to the same condition ; that the archiepiscopal chair of Canterbury may no longer be filled by a mitred prelate, that the functions and arduous duties may outlive the well appointed dignity of the sacred office, and that some humble pastor, like Rodolphe Peyrani, with the empty title of Bishop, may be obliged to the compassion of strangers for temporary relief. I am only imagining a fatal recurrence of what may happen again. The visible and Episcopal Church of England was once dwindled down to a few faithful adherents of Charles the Second, who formed his little court; and more than shared his need. May Heaven avert a second such blow, and may the honoured members of the Eng-

lish hierarchy continue to exert themselves, as they have hitherto done, to preserve the remnant of a Church, from which their own pure Establishment derives most of its doctrines !

\* \* \* \* \*

Reader, the sufferings of Rodolphe Peyrani are at an end. He died about three months after our interview with him. His spirit could no longer bear up against a complication of maladies and sorrows, and now, all that I remember of him is literally like a dream that is past, or a tale that is told. His death was communicated to me in a letter from one of my Vaudois friends, M. Bert, the pastor of La Torre. Its simple eulogy does honour both to the writer, and to him of whom it was written.

“ Dans la supposition que vous n’avez pas entretenir de relation avec d’autres personnes de ce pays, c’est à moi un triste devoir de vous annoncer que nous avons perdu M. Peyrani, Modérateur, depuis le fin d’Avril. C’est dans son genre une perte irréparable.”

The father is happily gone to his rest, but it is painful to speak of his son, of that excellent young man whom we were all so disposed to esteem. He is now studying, preparatory to taking orders, at Lausanne, and existing upon a pittance which is not enough for the necessities of life. I heard of him lately. He was invited to the house of an English family, but his garb was so indifferent that he could not accept the invitation, until a fellow student had the kindness to lend him his clothes for the day !

An anecdote, in illustration of the talents of the late Moderator Peyrani, of his useful application of them, and the obscurity in which they were buried, must conclude my melancholy narrative.

*Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat  
Res angusta domi.*

A few years ago a Catholic Curè, of Geneva, wrote a pamphlet in defence of the adoration of saints, and image worship. It was much admired, had a great sale, and was thought by the friends of the Curè to be unanswerable. The Protestants of Geneva were burning to see a reply to this able tract, but none appeared, to the disappointment and mortification of every good Lutheran and Calvinist. Just at the crisis of its popularity, Mr. Lowther, the author of "Brief Observations on the present State of the Waldenses," happened to be on his visit to the Valleys, and in an interview with M. Peyrani, expressed his regret that no answer had been made to this redoubtable pamphlet. The moderator drew some papers from his desk, and shewed Mr. Lowther that he himself had drawn up a reply.

"But why have you not published it?" it was asked.

"Because I have not the means. I cannot print it at my own expence, and know of nobody who will undertake it."

Mr. Lowther begged, and obtained consent to take charge of the MS. and to send it to the press.

It was printed, had a rapid run, and was so admirably well written, was so convincing, so keen and cutting, that the Catholic polemic bought up all the remaining unsold pamphlets of his own, out of shame. Mr. Lowther assured me that he was unable to buy a single impression, though he offered a louis for one, when he wanted to have it inserted in a volume of miscellaneous articles, and that he was obliged to borrow one, and to have it *written* out in the place of a printed copy.

• "Lettre de Ferrari à M. Cellerier," was the title of the first pamphlet, and "Réponse à la Lettre de M. Ferrari, Curè du Grand Sacconex, par un Protestant," was the title of the second.



## CHAPTER V.

*Leave Pomaretto—Alpine scenery—Pinerolo—Ancient inn—Excursion to the Valley of Lucerna—Mount Viso—Intolerance—Anecdote—Vaudois Heroism—Anecdote—Patriarchal Simplicity—Church of San Giovanni—Ludicrous Bigotry—Lovely vale of San Giovanni—Beautiful Landscape—La Torre—Too frequent intermarriages—Church of La Torre—Its romantic situation—M. Bert—Attended service in the Church—Monumental inscriptions—Peasantry—Village inn and accommodation—Murderous plot against the Protestants—M. Odetti—The plot—Fanaticism—Rendezvous of conspirators—General Godin—March of the Vaudois soldiers for the preservation of their families—Threatened by the torrents—Vesper bell, signal of destruction—Work of assassination—The assassins—Retribution—Injustice—General Zimmerman—Immunities and privileges granted to Vaudois—Grievances of the Vaudois—Absurd restrictions—Imposts—Disqualifications—Agriculture—Trade—Laughable mistake.*

AFTER our most interesting visit to Pomaretto we returned to Perosa in that serious and meditative mood which the nature of our enquiries was calculated to produce. The obscurity of evening was encreased by the masses of rock that projected above and around, and every object corresponded with the dreariness of the scenery, and the gloom that affected us.

\* \* \* "At every step,  
Solemn and slow, the shadows blacker fell,  
And all was awful listening gloom around."

As we passed one of the insecure bridges that are thrown across the torrent, we met a string of mules, whose cautious steps reminded us, that it is not inconvenience only which at-



tends a traveller in this wild and rugged region, but that perils also wait upon his path, and that nature is too sparing of her bounty, in the valley of the Clusone, to suffer its inhabitants to provide against more than the absolute necessities of the hour. A few loose planks formed the largest of the bridges which connect Pomaretto and Perosa. Before next winter they will most likely be washed away. The furnace of a smelting house was blazing as we passed it : its strong glare in the darkness of the night served to discover, and to set off some of the savage features of this rude glen, and seeing them, as we did, to perfection, we could not feel surprised that the Alps should furnish materials for so many tales and romances, when they present such outlines to the eye, which the imagination may fill up with all that can inspire wonder or terror.

We returned to and slept at Pinerolo, at an inn or hotel which must once have been the residence of some bold baron, but has been long since converted into an humble designation. A large court-yard serves now for the receptacle of carts and other vehicles, a gallery runs round the building, and opens into several corridors, which communicate with large and dreary apartments ; some gilded wainscoating, and the remains of what were once ornamental cornices, proclaim the departed grandeur of other days. The kitchen is an immense and vaulted chamber, the ceiling and walls of which have not been whitened for years ; it resounded when we walked across it, as if it were constructed over a range of subterraneous passages. We had a capital supper, and among other things a large dish of the very small fish, a minute species of eel, which is considered so delicious in Piemont, and some of the muscat wine, which pleased us so much at Perosa ; but this good cheer did not reconcile us to what followed. Upon asking for our bed-rooms, we were told that we were to sleep where we had supped. There were but two beds,

and these it was thought afforded ample accommodation for *five* gentlemen. For a length of time we were scarcely belived, when we refused to be so accommodated, and it was not till after a great deal of discussion that they made up a third bed in this room, and put two of us into a cold straggling apartment, where we found what we-demanded.

The morning of our leaving Pinerolo for the Valley of Lucerna was so bright and beautiful, that the air was fresh rather than cold, and for the first time, since we were upon Italian soil, we enjoyed the sight of an Italian sky. There was all that clear blueness, and appearance of wider expanse in the firmament, which make one fancy that the vault of Heaven is loftier in this region than in our own. The country too, that we passed over, wore a very different aspect to that which we visited the previous evening, it was more open and productive, and did not so soon shrink into glens and defiles. The silvery tops of the distant mountains shone with uncommon splendour, and the whole drive to La Torre was one of the most cheerful that we had enjoyed. The first view of Mount Viso was imposing in the extreme. It is below the level of eternal snow, but its sides and brow were now covered, and the dazzling whiteness of its peaks burst upon us at a sudden turn in the road, and called forth a general exclamation of delight. No pencil can do justice to the bright tints of a mountain's snowy top sparkling in the sun.

On leaving Pinerolo we followed the fine broad road that leads to Saluzzo, in a due southerly direction for about two miles, crossed the Clusone over an ill-built and crazy bridge, and at the hamlet of Onasco turned into a cross-road to the right, and continued our route towards the west. Bricherasio was the last Catholic commune through which we passed : it is well situated, but though it is within the Pelice and the Clusone, the boundary rivers of the Protestant limits, yet, like the other two or

three villages in the plain, its lands are considered too productive to be suffered to remain under the cultivation of heretics; and Protestant families are not permitted to make any purchases or settlements within its limitations. The laws on this subject are so severe, that a Vaudois pastor is not permitted to sleep in any of the villages which are immediately adjoining to those of his own community, and a minister was exposed here to a curious dilemma upon this very edict of exclusion. He had been to visit one of his flock who was taken ill at Bricherasio, and a snow-storm at night was so violent that he was unable to return to his own habitation. The poor man dare not go to bed, for fear of exposing himself to the penalties of the law, and actually sat up all night to evade it, and to be able to swear that he did not *sleep* at Bricherasio.

The nearer we approached the boundaries of San Giovanni, or St. Jean, the first Protestant village, the greater interest M. Vertu took in the country; and when he crossed the limits, he seemed to breathe a new air, and to enjoy a new existence. He was all delight to be upon the soil of his own native valley, kept pointing out to us every well-known spot, recounting anecdotes of the days of persecution, and assigning a tale to every hamlet within view. The grove upon the slope of the hill, and by the road-side, just as we got within the confines, was an object of particular regard. "It had been an out-post," he said, "in many a bloody skirmish between the Catholic and Protestant borders."

He pointed to the banks of the Pelice, near Lucerna. "At that bend of the river," he told us, "tradition had consecrated the spot to the recollection of an exploit more memorable than the achievement of Leander himself. A Catholic had paid great attention to the lessons of a Vaudois friend, and gave such proof of his heart being touched, that the latter thought no opportu-

nity ought to be lost of pressing his conversion while he appeared to be in a favourable mood. His visits used to be nocturnal. On the night when he flattered himself that his arguments would prevail, the floods had cut off the usual means of access. It was winter, and the torrent was alarmingly broad and rapid; but the Christian hero was not to be interrupted or daunted in his holy enterprize: he boldly plunged into the waters, swam across, and reaped his reward in the conversion of his friend from Popery."

The new church of San Giovanni, and that of La Torre, or La Tour, just distinguishable under the frowning crag, that serves as a land-mark for many miles before it is approached, were spots to which M. Vertu particularly directed our eyes, and where he fixed his own with looks of reverential admiration; but when we were once fairly among the houses and inhabitants of San Giovanni, he could no longer contain his satisfaction. It was a burst of youthful ecstasy, of undisguised and irrepressible joy, which communicated itself to us, and increased the esteem which we already entertained for our amiable companion. He had not been for many months in the valley which gave him birth, and where every string that was touched beat in unison with those of his own heart.

The mountains and vales of the Vaudois are retreats of hospitable kindness and confidence, where patriarchal simplicity and unaffected manners prevail to an extent, which is seldom seen elsewhere; and when a young man, like M. Vertu, finds himself transported from a capital, where all is constraint and suspicion, to such a scene, his heart cannot but surrender itself to the enthusiasm of the moment.

It was a Sabbath morning when we passed through San Giovanni, and the peasants were going to church. As groupes, or individuals, met us, our friend from Turin nodded to one, and

spoke to another ; seemed to know every body, and told us who were Roman Catholics, and who Protestants : in fact, we soon distinguished them ourselves ; for it is notorious that the Protestant peasantry may be recognized by the superior cleanliness of their appearance.

The new church of San Giovanni is a large brick building, which stands nobly upon rising ground, and may be seen at some distance. Nearly opposite to it is the Catholic church. Before the great door of the former, I was surprised to see a lofty screen, or palisade ; and concluded that the front of the edifice had never been finished. But this unsightly wood-work was erected, that the pious Catholics of San Giovanni might not be shocked at seeing their heretical neighbours enter their place of worship, or house of abomination. The number of the latter amounts to seventeen hundred, and more ; that of the former does not exceed forty ! The old Protestant church was destroyed above a hundred years ago, in one of the persecutions, and never suffered to be re-built till the French occupied Piemont. It has been the policy of the Catholic government not to allow a dilapidated church or presbytery of the Waldenses to be restored ; and to this hour the pastor of San Giovanni has not been permitted to have a house appropriated to his office, as the ministers of the other twelve parishes have. When the French put the Vaudois upon the same footing as the other inhabitants of the province, they took advantage of their privileges, and built the new church. But what was the consternation of the Protestant population of San Giovanni, when the edict of May, 1814, commanded them to shut up the sacred edifice ! Their supplications were unnoticed ; the court paid no attention to its heretical subjects, and the interdict would have continued, but for the repeated intervention of the Protestant ambassadors ; among

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THE CHURCH OF SAN GIOVANNI OR ST. JEAN



whom the Prussian minister exerted himself with his wonted ardour. The church was re-opened, but only upon the humiliating condition of raising this hideous screen, this deformity, so disgraceful to the Papists who insisted upon its erection, and so mortifying to the professors of the other creed, who are obliged to submit to it.

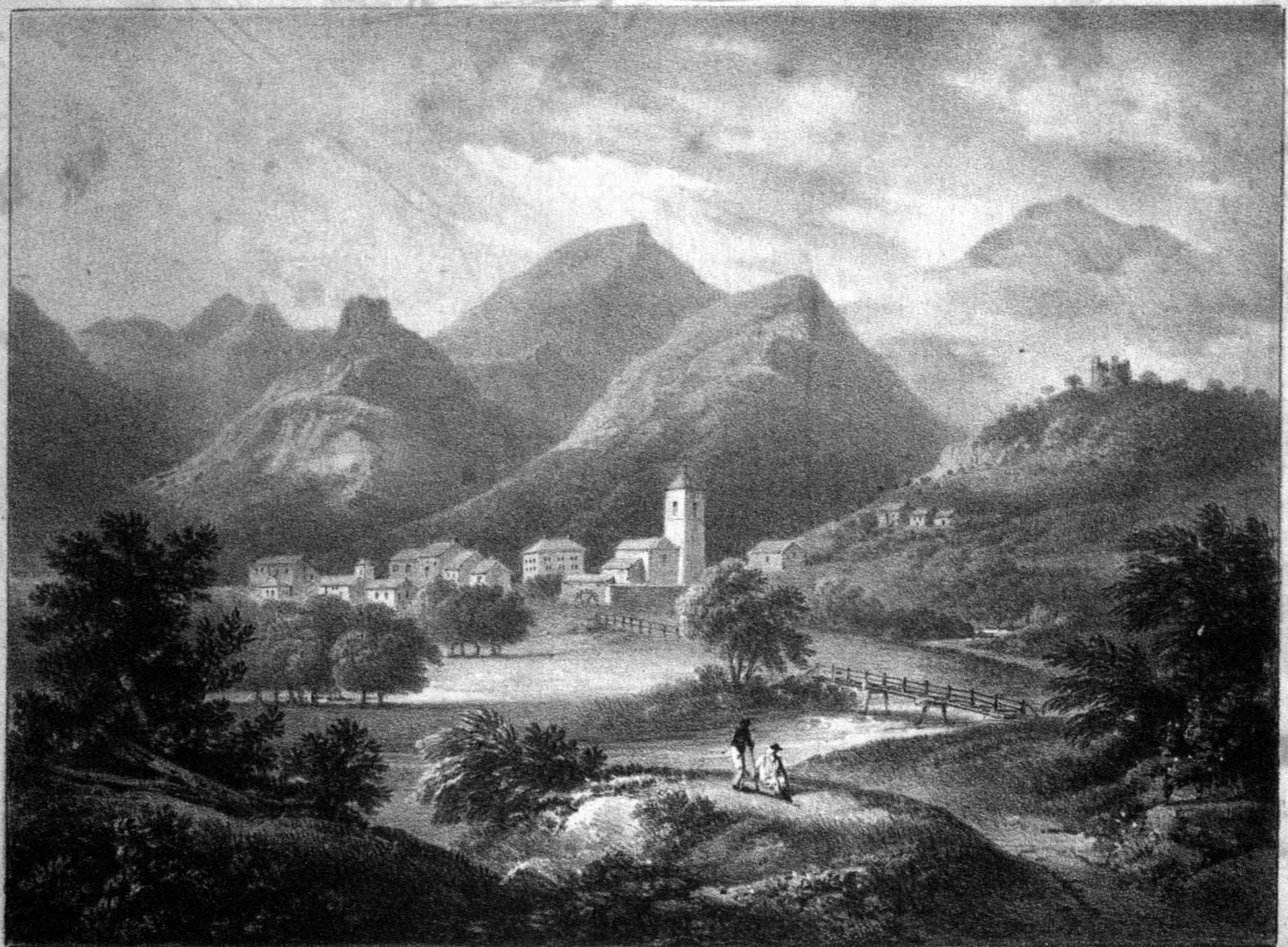
The scruples of the Catholics of La Torre were indulged in another matter, equally at the expense of the Protestants of that village. The new school gave offence; they were scandalised as they passed it, to hear the infant heretics repeating their wicked lessons! Their remonstrances were respected by the minister of the interior, who, when he found he could not shut up the school, removed the scandal as far as he could, by commanding a partition to be made on the outside, so that the ears of the faithful might no longer be offended. Such are the pitiful and vexatious proceedings, which are still in force against the innocent and harmless Waldenses. The opinions of the age will no longer allow of corporeal punishment for religious differences, and bigotry therefore is obliged to content itself with this wretched mode of showing its disappointment. As it cannot be cruel, it is ridiculous.

After leaving the village of San Giovanni, we entered a lovely vale. The Pelice flowed in the middle: on the other side of the river stood Lucerna, which is seen to great advantage from the road. La Torre was directly before us, and the heights of Angrogna rose magnificently to the right. This is by far the richest spot which is left in possession of the Protestants. In the sweet language of Italy, it is indeed "*una pianura fertile e graziosa, e l'amenità della campagna rende questo viaggio sommamente delizioso.*" Gardens and vineyards, orchards and groves, corn land and pastures, mulberry trees, and the stateliest chesnuts, are intermingled in the most picturesque confusion; and the variety

of hill and dale, before the acclivities swell into mountains, complete one of the loveliest landscapes in Piemont.

The descriptions of Leger, the historian of the Vaudois, are generally plain matter-of-fact statements, where the style is uniform; but the beauties of San Giovanni, for once, called forth a more animated strain. "It would be a little earthly paradise," said he, "if it were not besieged by Roman Catholics on the east and on the south. It is a beautiful vale, embroidered on the south by verdant meadows, which are watered by the river Pelice: the rest of the vale does not merely consist of corn fields, but of fields, vineyards, and orchards intermixed. The vines are trained up to the very tops of lofty trees; and the tendrils, twining together, and forming graceful festoons, stretch from branch to branch, and *ferment des ravissantes treilles*, under which the peasants are seen plowing with their oxen, or reaping the finest wheat in the world. All the roads, the walks, and the hedges, which separate different farms, are agreeably bordered with different sorts of fruit trees, and particularly with mulberries, which the inhabitants cultivate for their silk-worms, and which help them to raise the money to pay their rents and taxes. This vale is environed and adorned, on the north and the west, by the most superb *costiere*, as they call it, in the world, and the prettiest hills imaginable, which look like one continued vineyard, or bower of vines, under which they sow all kinds of grain; while the soil is refreshed by means of a conduit of water brought from the torrent of Angrogna."

When we arrived at the torrent of Angrogna, the smiling features of San Giovanni were immediately succeeded by the more grand and imposing scenery of La Torre. We were now again in the midst of mountains, and had hastened on, that we might be in time for the church service, when the sound of the steeple bell, pouring its music on the breeze, greeted us with the wel-



*Drawn by F. Nicholson*

*From a sketch by the Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Fortescue*

LA TORRE OR LA TOUR.

*London. Pub<sup>d</sup> by C & J. Rivington, S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Church Y<sup>d</sup> & Waterloo Place 1824.*

*Printed by C. Hullmandel.*

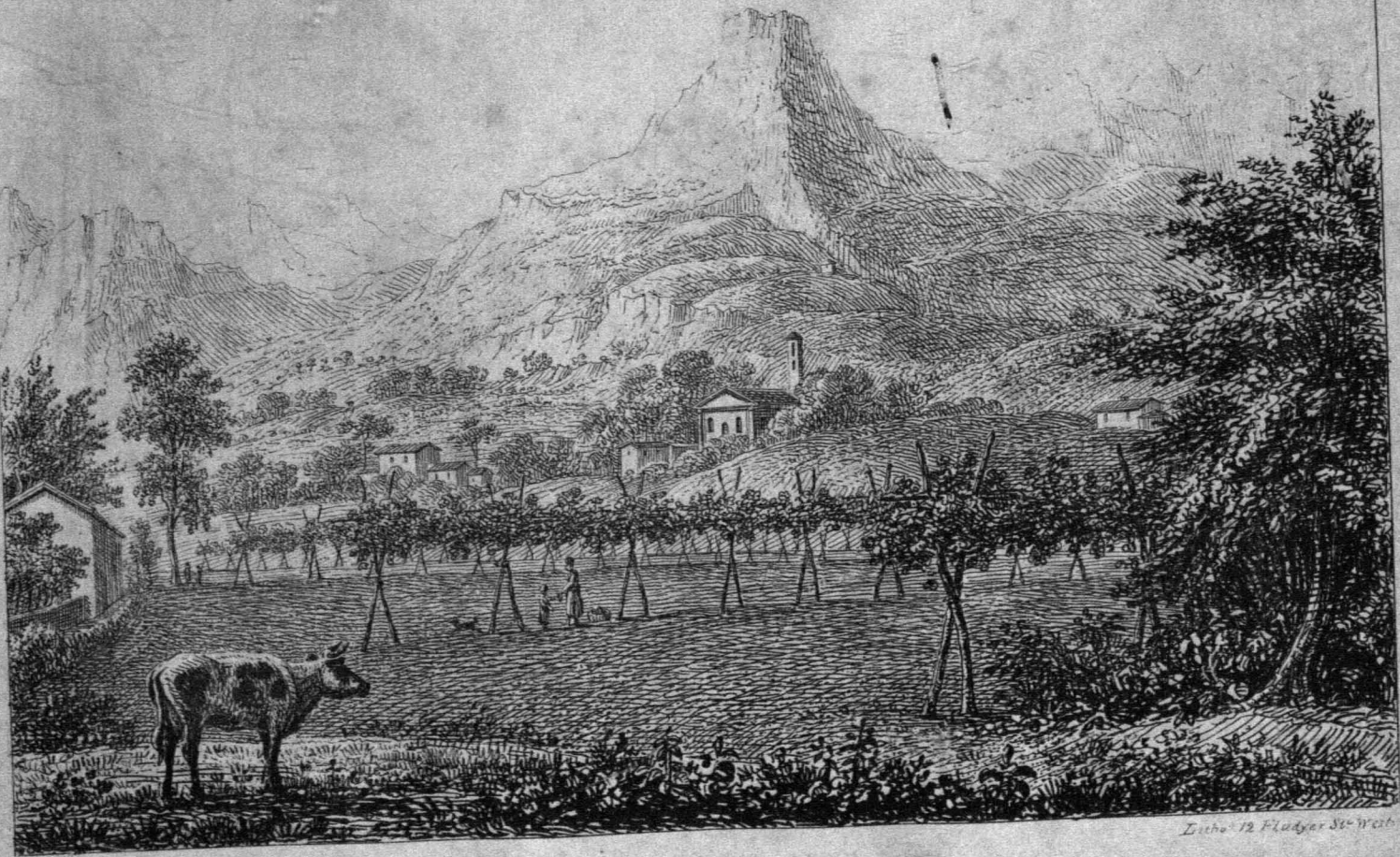
come information that we were not too late. The clatter of the wheels, and the unusual sight of a carriage in this secluded village, brought but few people to the doors ; for almost all were gone, or hurrying forward, to the house of God. We alighted at the little inn, and joined those who had not yet reached the sacred spot to which they were bending their steps ; and the greetings and salutations which passed between M. Vertu and the cheerful-looking groupes whom we overtook, were even more affecting than what we witnessed at San Giovanni ; for here he was in his native parish, and in the midst of relations. Almost every one whom he accosted was an uncle or an aunt, or a cousin of near or distant branch. But however interesting at the moment it may be to see the hearty shake of the hand, and the kind salute of kindred and clanship, it must be considered as one of the evils to which they are exposed, that the little community of the Waldenses must be for ever intermarrying, family with family. Catholics and Protestants cannot wed, under the risk of being subjected to a variety of vexatious suits ; and the consequence is, that there is no end to the connexions, which are perpetually forming between very near relatives.

The first appearance of La Torre gives a more favourable idea of this village than a closer inspection will permit the traveller to form. The two bridges that are built over the torrent at its entrance, the water-mill, and the Catholic church, that are seen to the right, with the ruins of the old castle, that peep from among the trees by which they are surrounded, on a hill that rises sufficiently high to command the village, are picturesque objects, which cheat the imagination into the belief, that La Torre itself must be a most enviable spot. But the street is narrow and ugly, and the houses are poorly constructed, and stand close together. The broadest part is dignified with the name of the Square, or Place de la Torre ; and the principal

building in it is a long heavy-looking edifice, which is still called the palace, although no longer the residence of the ancient Counts of La Torre. The family is extinct, and the house is now the property of one of the Vertus, who occupies a part, and lets the rest.

After passing through a long line of street, we came to a hamlet which is called the Borgo of S. Marguerita, from whence the church of La Torre, overhung by the tremendous crag of Castelluzzo, is seen to great advantage. In passing through La Torre, every thing that I saw reminded me of what I had been accustomed to in England on a Sabbath-day, so unlike the usual appearance of towns on the continent. Silence and decency prevailed in the streets, smartness in the dress, and cleanliness in the countenance of the rustics. Even the clean close caps of the female peasantry resembled those of my own native parish in Suffolk; and when we reached the church-yard, the comparison was still more striking; for the villagers were assembled before the church-door, waiting for the clergyman, who had not yet come, and enjoying the fineness of the weather. The sun-shine of the heart seemed to harmonize with the brightness of the day. I employed the short interval before we entered the sacred walls, in taking a view of the objects around me. The church of La Torre is rather a large building, and stands upon a very picturesque eminence, surrounded by trees and vineyards, and at the distance of about a mile from the village. The rising ground on which it is built bursts abruptly towards the north and west, into rocky eminences, and these into lofty crags and towering mountains: some of which protrude so far from their base, that they look as if they would inevitably fall, and overwhelm every thing below them. The church-yard might be rendered still more pleasing to the eye, if the graves and turf were kept in better order; but I have never seen any consecrated spot on the other

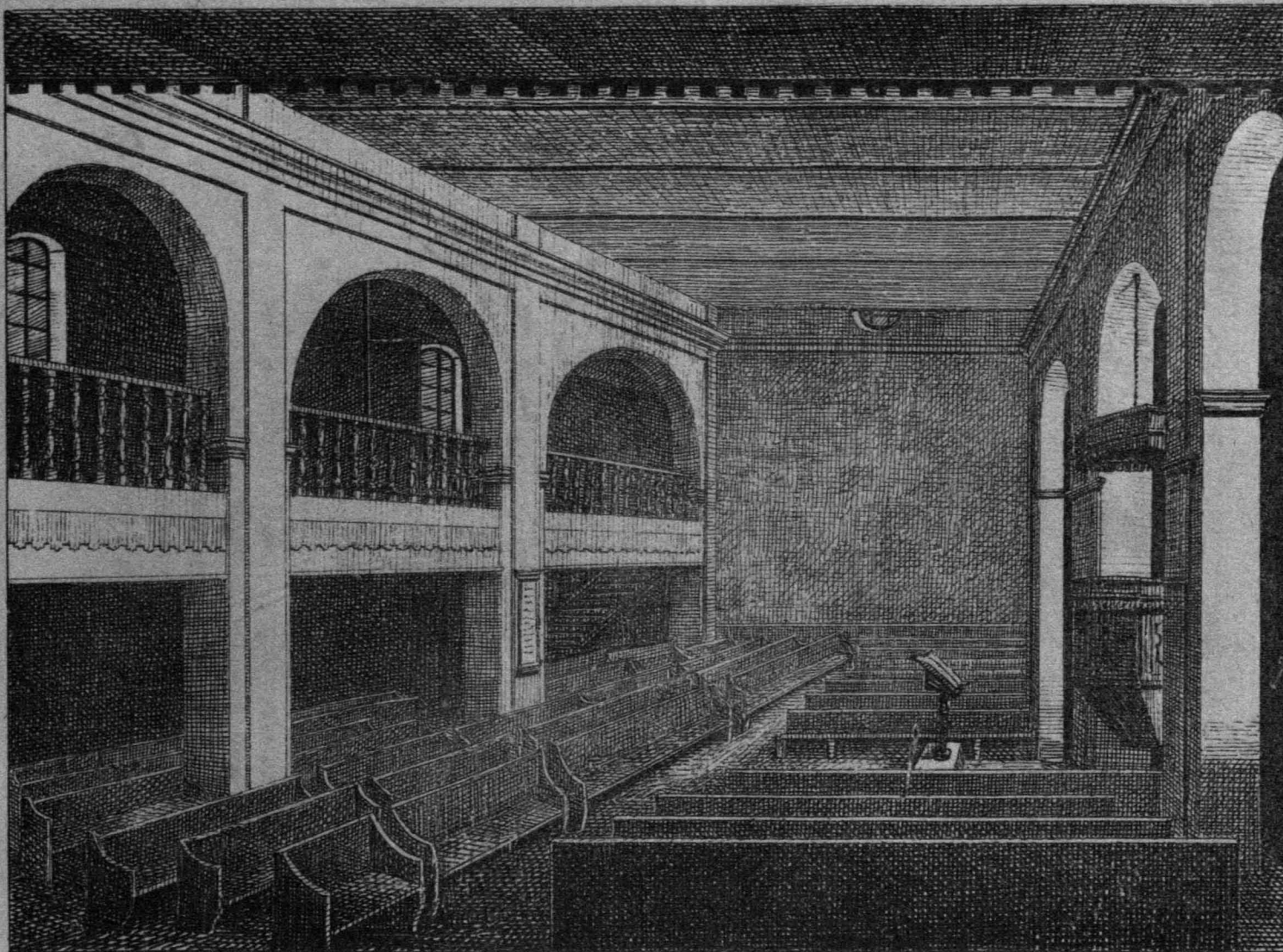




H. W. 1841

Litho. 12 Fludger St. West

A DISTANT VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF LA TORRE AND THE CRAG CASTELLUZZO.



*Litho'd 12. Fludger Set Westm.*

INTERIOR OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF LA TORRE



side of the channel, which, in this respect, can compare with those of our own. The front of the church not only commands a prospect of the village, and the winding road conducting from it, but also a very extensive view of the vale through which the Pelice flows, on the San Giovanni side; and the heights above are said to present the magnificent sight of the plains of the Po, spreading like a map before the eye.

M. Bert, the exemplary pastor of La Torre, soon arrived, in his gown and band, and received the affectionate attentions of his flock, before he preceded them into church. The service commenced with reading two chapters from the Gospels, (second and third of St. Matthew) by the school-master; and after the chapter, an explanation of it. The practice of permitting a layman to read the lessons, is not at all unusual in some of our own country places, and therefore did not strike me as being irregular. After the chapter, a psalm was sung (Psalm v. 3, 4), accompanied by an organ, the only one in the Protestant valleys; and M. Bert then delivered an exhortation to prayer, from a printed form. A kind of state prayer followed; and, if I remember right, an extempore supplication. Next the Lord's prayer; afterwards the sermon; then a long petition<sup>p</sup>, or collect, from the book; the Lord's prayer again; the belief; a psalm sung (Psalm ciii. 1, 2); another exhortation from the Liturgy; and a blessing concluded the service.

The inside of the church was perfectly plain; and, with the assistance of a gallery, calculated to hold a very large congregation. I did not observe any division, to answer the description of a chancel: the communion table stands directly in front of the pulpit; and the pulpit is placed near the centre of the church. The men sit on one side, and the women on the other; not in pews, but on benches; and the whole congregation join in

<sup>p</sup> See the Appendix, No. 6.

the singing. There were several monumental inscriptions in the church, both on the pavement, and on mural tablets: one of the latter excited my attention so much, that I took an opportunity of copying it. It was erected in memory of an English lady, who died at Turin, in 1817.

HIC JACET QUOD RELIQUUM EST CHRISTIANÆ,  
THOMÆ ALLAN ARMIGERI, EDINBURGENSIS,  
DILECTISSIMÆ CONJUGIS,  
NECNON GEORGII SMITH, ARMIGERI DE MONK-CONISTON  
IN COMITATU LANCASTRIÆ APUD ANGLŌS  
FILLÆ PISSIMÆ.  
OBIIT AUGUSTÆ TAURINORUM. MALÆ DIE 14, 1817.

" Here lie the remains of Christina, the beloved wife of Thomas Allan, Esquire, of Edinburgh, and the affectionate daughter of George Smith, Esquire, of Monk Coniston, in the county of Lancaster, in England. She died at Turin, on the 14th day of May, 1817."

I observed that neither in the church of La Torre, nor in either of the other churches that I examined, was there any appearance of armorial bearing to be discovered among the inscriptions that recorded the names and family of native Vaudois. In fact, these simple people have no distinctions of birth or rank; and if any of them are descended from the nobles of Piemont, or any other country, they do not, as far as I could gather, keep up the honours of such ancestry. It would be happy for them if they had some kindred and friends among the great and powerful.

The countenances and figures of the rustics, whom we saw assembled together upon this occasion, were not, upon the whole, particularly striking for beauty or symmetry; some of the young women were pretty, but there were only two whom we noticed above the rest. One had a very sweet face, lovely in health and innocence: the other was a charming girl, whose manner and appearance were much superior to the others. Her fair complexion, light hair, and blue eyes, would have distin-

guished her from amidst the darker features of her companions, even if her blushes, when she met M. Vertu, had not told a tale. We learnt that a mutual attachment existed between them, and that the belle of the valley is as amiable as she is handsome.

Upon our return to the village, I renewed my acquaintance with M. Bert, and received the kindest assurances from him, that every accommodation which his house could furnish, should be at our service. The uncles of M. Vertu did the same ; but we considered ourselves too large a party to press upon their hospitality, and established ourselves at the very comfortable inn in the centre of La Torre, where we were surprised, and gratified to find that nothing was wanting to make it an agreeable residence, for as many days as a traveller may choose to stay. We had been told at Turin, and by persons whose official situation rendered it a duty to make themselves better acquainted with the condition of the inhabitants of this Protestant district, that it would be necessary to carry provisions with us, if we thought of remaining any time in either of the three valleys : and the same informants added, that there was nothing in the scenery to make a journey of thirty miles from the capital worth the trouble : so little are these interesting people, and their picturesque country, known by the world. They are certainly poor, and unprovided with what contributes to the luxuries of life ; but none, whose object is research, and for whom the sublime beauties of nature have charms, need fear that their habits will be too much entrenched upon even in these secluded spots.

Our visit to one of the houses of La Torre, had a degree of intense interest communicated to it, by receiving a confirmation of the horrible plot against the Vaudois, in 1794, which Mr. Lowther<sup>1</sup> has detailed in his little memoir with so

<sup>1</sup> See also *“Notice sur l'etat actuel des Eglises Vaudoises, Paris. 1822,”* for a confirmation of this plot.

much feeling. We were shewn the very spot, on which the generous Odetti communicated the nature of the conspiracy to the father of the present possessor of the house, and it was explained to us how the windows and entrances were to have been barricaded, and the feeble means of defence prepared against the treacherous assault. M. Odetti was a captain of the Piemontese militia, then embodied, and acting against the French invaders, and a little before the fatal blow was to have been struck, he had been invited to join the conspirators in a general massacre of the Vaudois. M. Odetti was a rigid Catholic, and it was expected that the well known severity of his principles would have induced him to sanction any measure for the destruction of heresy. The Curè of Lucerna, M. Brianza, was also admitted into the secret, but these two worthy men had too much of the real spirit of Christianity even to conceal, and much less to join in the plot. Brianza sent a private message to La Torre, to apprize the inhabitants of their danger, but did not succeed in putting them sufficiently upon their guard. Odetti, knowing that the hour of action was so near that nothing but very prompt measures could frustrate the sanguinary design, set out from Cavour himself, which is on the other side of the Pelice, and at some distance from La Torre, and hastened to his friend, to give him the alarming information. "I am afraid," said he, "that I am too late to prevent bloodshed.—There is a conspiracy against you. The assassins are even now on foot, but if I cannot save you, I will perish with you. The honour of my religion is at stake, I must justify it by sharing your danger."

The consternation in La Torre was beyond all description at the horrible intelligence, which was now spread from house to house, and every habitation soon assumed the appearance of hopeless terror. The windows were closed and barred, and piles of stone were collected to hurl down upon the heads of the as-

sailants, but aged men, and women and children, were the only persons left to use them. The strength and flower of the population were eight or nine miles off, and occupied in defending the mountain passes against the French. Scarcely a man who could bear arms was away from this loyal duty, and yet this was the moment at which no less than eight hundred bigoted monsters had sworn to exterminate all the Protestants of the valley of Lucerna, and to spread murder and devastation from San Giovanni to Bobbio.

But even assassins like these must have some false motive to disguise their real object. Piedmont was at this period the scene of operations between the French and the allied armies. The plan of the campaign on the part of the republicans was, to penetrate into the country with a vast superiority of forces, to extend their line from the Valais to the sources of the Stura, and to seize the first favourable opportunity to march upon the capital. The invading army had a division of 25,000 men preparing to move upon the provinces of Pinerolo and Saluzzo only, and keeping up a line of communication with 50,000 more, who were waiting to strike a blow against Turin. The French troops had met with such effectual resistance in attempting to enter the valleys of the Vaudois by the other passes, that they determined to try what could be done in a quarter where they were not so much expected to make an attack. A detachment crossed the mountains between Mount Viso and the Col d'Aliries, or Abries, and suddenly appeared before the fort of Mirabouc, which stands at no great distance from the source of the Pelice, and at the very extremity of the valley of Lucerna. Not a Vaudois was in the fort when it surrendered, but the fanatical party thought it a good opportunity to inflame the public mind against the Protestants, and it was pretended that they had betrayed the fortress. The cry of "revenge, revenge," passed from mouth to mouth; the night of the 14th of May was

appointed for the execution of it, and the house and garden of the Catholic Curè of La Torre were the head quarters, or rendezvous from which the conspirators were to rush upon their defenceless prey.

Not an instant was to be lost; the day was already arrived when Captain Odetti gave the information, and at sunset the murderers were to begin to assemble.

The only chance of safety consisted in sending notice of the plot to General Godin, a Swiss officer, who commanded the Piemontese troops on the nearest frontier. That brave man turned a deaf ear to the messenger, because he could not believe in the existence of so base a conspiracy. Another and another messenger arrived, but with no better success. At length several fugitives made their appearance from La Torre; the dreadful news reached the Vaudois soldiers themselves, and in a state of the utmost apprehension for the lives of their families, they insisted upon being despatched to their succour. The general became sensible of his error, but not in time to give him hopes of being able to preserve the innocent victims. The day was wearing away, the fatal hour was named in which the work of blood was to commence, and nothing but extraordinary speed could possibly enable a detachment to reach the spot before it began. To repair his unfortunate error the general commanded the brigade of Vaudois to march instantly, and followed himself with another division.

The wretched husbands and fathers pursued their way in almost frantic desperation. The imminent danger of their wives and children rendered any regularity of march out of the question: they precipitated themselves down steeps which they would have shuddered to encounter upon any other occasion, urged each other on with wild shouts, and prayed aloud to heaven to give them additional speed. As they advanced on the road, they were repeatedly met by parties of



distracted women, and frightened children, sent forward from La Torre to hasten their pace. Many of these, in their terror and despair, assured them that they were too late : that the business of death was even then proceeding.

With breathless haste, and in a state of excruciating suspense, they hurried on. The shades of the evening fell with increasing darkness, and with them a storm of rain that brought the torrents down the mountains, and threatened to impede their further advance. They began to accuse Providence of being leagued against them. The waters poured down from the heights in such accumulated violence, that it was almost madness to prosecute their march : nothing but desperation could have prompted them to go on. The last torrent that they had to pass was rushing with unusual impetuosity, but they dashed through it in safety, and in a few minutes after arrived within sight of La Torre. At the same moment they heard the tolling of the vespers bell of the convent of the Récollets : this, they had been told, was to be the fatal signal for the assassins to sally forth.

The unhappy men felt that they were too late. " We will revenge," they cried, " if we cannot prevent"—and their speed was not abated. They rushed into the street of the village ; the tramp of their feet, and the clangor of their arms were heard within the houses, and to the unutterable joy of these gallant deliverers, hundreds of voices were raised to welcome and bless their appearance.

The arm of God had done that which man's could not do : the time was not enough to allow of the arrival of the Vaudois, before the signal was to have been given for the conspirators to put themselves in action, but the rain-storm, and violence of the torrents, which had no terrors for men advancing in a good cause, had alarmed and stopped the murderers. Many of those

who should have arrived at the rendezvous, had not reached it, and those, who were there, dare not move forward upon this sanguinary enterprize, until their numbers were encreased.

Considering the violent state of excitement to which the passions of the Vaudois soldiery were raised, it is natural to suppose, that surrendering themselves up to the feelings of the moment, they wreaked their vengeance upon the most criminal, at least, of their enemies. But no, not a drop of blood was spilt; satisfied with the preservation of their friends, they were guilty of no violence upon the persons or property of any of the Catholics, who were accomplices in the plot. The assassins escaped in the darkness of the night, and the Vaudois took no other steps towards their chastisement, than to forward a list of the conspirators to the government, who made no enquiry into the matter, and suffered them to go unpunished.

The guilty escaped, but the innocent were disgraced. General Godin was tried by a military commission, for suffering his detachment to quit the frontiers. Upon that charge he was acquitted, but he had excited the jealousy of the court by favouring the Protestants, and was first removed from the command of the troops in the valley of Lucerna to the valley of San Martino, and afterwards was dismissed from the service, without receiving any mark of the royal approbation. His successor, General Zimmerman, was a Catholic, but his sense of equity would not allow him to bear hard upon the Vaudois: on the contrary, he made repeated representations to the king in their favour, and at last succeeded in obtaining certain privileges, which were never before, conceded to them. It is almost like a fable to record what these concessions were, in return for "the constant and distinguished proofs of their attachment and fidelity" to the royal cause. But they appear among the state papers of the day, and were, first, "*permission to practice medi-*

*cine among themselves ;*" secondly, " an investigation into the choice of municipal officers, placed at the head of Protestant communes, many of whom were ineligible to the office from their general want of qualification ;" thirdly, " an amendment of the law by which the Protestant children might be forcibly taken from their parents, and educated in the Catholic religion," and fourthly, " a promise, that if any charge should be brought against the Vaudois, from which Catholics are exempt, we shall see that justice is administered."

These magnificent concessions were headed with the following preamble, and dated 4th June, 1794, a convincing proof that there could be no foundation for accusing the Vaudois of betraying Fort Mirabouc, or of any other treason against the state.

" We have read the memorial presented to us from you, by General Zimmerman, respecting the desires expressed by our dear and faithful subjects the Vaudois, relating to their actual political existence. In consideration of the constant and distinguished proofs, which they have ever given to our royal predecessors, of their attachment and fidelity, and the zeal which they have shewn *in pressing into the army for the defeat of our enemies* ; we are disposed to receive their memorial favourably, and to make them feel, from the present moment, the effects of our special protection ; making only some reservation as to some articles which require more explanation ; granting them, after the war, such concessions as may be compatible with the constitution of the state, and which may assure them of the *value we entertain for their services*, and the interest which we take in their existence and their happiness.

(Signed) " VICTOR AMADEUS."

It is difficult to reconcile these and similar royal acknowledgements of the services, which the Vaudois have never ceased to

render to their sovereigns, in times of emergency, with the grievances and humiliations to which they are exposed. The nineteenth century is disgraced by the barbarous edicts in force against them; and if they could not be authenticated by the most indisputable evidence, it would appear incredible that the following complaints should be but a few among the numberless, which they have to urge. Some of the restrictions would be quite ludicrous, if their effects were not felt too keenly to be matter for a smile.

“No Protestant can inherit or purchase land beyond the limitations of the Clusone and Pelice.”—It is hoped that purchases made before the restoration, will not be disturbed; but no petitions have succeeded in obtaining a repeal of the obnoxious law. A Protestant lately applied to the government for permission to buy a house, and a small piece of ground contiguous to it, in Turin. It was answered by an intimation, that the enactments on this subject must remain untouched; but that no interruption to the transaction would be offered by the legal authorities. Of course, land upon such a tenure is scarcely worth having.

“No books of instruction or devotion, for the use of the Protestants, may be printed in Piedmont;” and the duty upon the importation of such books is enormous.

“No Vaudois may practise as a physician, surgeon, apothecary, attorney, or advocate, except among his own community, and within the limits.”

Even in the communes of the three valleys, there may not be a majority of Protestants. For example; of the five syndics, three must be Catholics. This is a crying evil in such places as Bobbio and San Giovanni, where the Protestants are as 1700 to 40, and the Catholic population of the lowest order. It frequently happens, that a duly qualified Catholic cannot be found in the commune to complete the number; and that the very re-

fuse of the people have been nominated, to keep within the letter of the law.

The Protestants are obliged to observe the festivals of the Catholics, and to abstain from work on those days. This is another excessive hardship. There is one holiday at least every week, and sometimes two or three: so that the Protestant peasant has never more than five days in the week for labour, and sometimes only three. The Sabbath day he keeps with scrupulous observance, while the Roman Catholic cares not for violating it. A poor Vaudois peasant was accused of irrigating his little meadow upon a festival day, and condemned to pay a fine for not observing the sanctity of a saint's day.

Fifteen sous a day in the winter, and twenty in the summer, is the utmost a peasant can earn: take away two or three days from his weekly earnings, and what a pittance is left! Roasted chesnuts, potatoes, and bread, if any, of the blackest and most ordinary sort, are the principal food they can obtain.

The Protestants have to pay a land-tax of  $20\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; while the Catholics pay but 13 per cent.

It will be seen from this statement, how very few are the resources of the Vaudois. From the military and civil employments, and from the learned professions, they are excluded. The valley of Lucerna is the only one which can be called productive; and, even there, agricultural pursuits cannot be prosecuted to much advantage, where the duties are high, and the restrictions so burdensome. A small trade is carried on in charcoal; and the silk-worm is reared in some of the hamlets; but there can scarcely be said to be any manufactures, when one woollen manufactory, and two tan-yards, are principally what come within this designation. The looms employ about thirty men, and forty women and children, and make about eight hundred pieces of cloth annually, of about forty yards to the piece. The tan-yard

at Bobbio finds occupation for four men ; and that at La Torre, for about five.

I did not ascertain what business is done in the few smelting-houses that I observed : the hands at work were not numerous.

This will not be an improper place to mention, that although La Torre is the principal village or town of the Vaudois, and contains a population of two thousand inhabitants, yet it offers not the least appearance of trade. Few shops are to be seen, and those are of a very humble character. My surprise at this want of shops, led me into a laughable mistake ; and it was the more ludicrous, considering the simple character of the people.

“ You have no shops at all,” I said to M. Vertu ; “ not even that of a *bourreau*.” I meant to say, *boucher*. “ *Bourreau !*” he exclaimed, “ what do we want with an *executioner* ? Why we have had but one capital conviction among us for a hundred years !”



## CHAPTER VI

*Angrogna—La Barrière—Cultivation—Cheerful landscape—Sabbath on the mountains—Religious and moral character of mountaineers—Village pastor's house—M. Paul Goante—Alpine cottages—Thuams—Want of religious books—Peasant of Angrogna—Mode of tillage—Mountain fastnesses—La Vachera—Pre du Tour—Obstinate and gallant conflicts there—Sublime mountain scenery—The Bouquetin—The Jumarre—Beautiful vale—Comparison between solitary and busy life—The fortress of La Torre.*

M. VERTU, of La Torre, brother to our friend at Turin, was many years in England during the early part of his life ; and his intimate knowledge of the English language, rendered him of great service to us, when we wished to make enquires connected with local and technical explanations. He had the kindness to accompany us to Angrogna, acting as our interpreter in several conversations which we had with the peasantry, who spoke the patois only of the country ; and to him I was indebted for much of the immediate information I picked up, as to the condition of agriculture, and the few manufactures of the Vaudois.

Angrogna lies to the north of La Torre, at the distance of about a mile and a half from the latter, and in the midst of some of the finest mountain scenery of which the Alps can boast. The mountain stream, which is called the Torrent of Angrogna, gives its name to a cluster of valleys which branch out like the

See Appendix, No. 11.

boughs of a tree, and runs into the Pelice, just below La Torre. It is supplied by innumerable springs of water, which gush from the rocks, and by following its course from the vale, the tourist will be conducted to the village itself, and higher up, to such a succession of picturesque spots, and secluded glens, as no description can do justice to. The natural beauties of the scenery of Angrogna, and the sublime objects of crag rising above crag, of enormous masses of rock debouching into the glens beneath, and of abysses, the depths of which the eye cannot penetrate, are rendered still more interesting by their being consecrated to the memory of heroes and martyrs, whose histories are in the mouth of every peasant.

There are few of these Alpine recesses occupied by the Vaudois, which have not legends of their own to amuse the stranger, independent of their local attractions ; but no commune is more distinguished in this respect than that of Angrogna. " L'éternel nostre Dieu," says Leger, " qui avoit destiné ce Pais-là pour en faire particulièrement le Theatre de ses merveilles, et l'Asyle de son Arche, l'a naturellement et merveilleusement fortifié." According to the same historian there were formerly two strong forts, or barriers, which defended the entrance of the passes to Angrogna, on the side of Lucerna and Bricherasio, capable of being held for a long time by a very few troops, who, if these were forced, might easily fall back upon a place called La Barricade, about half a league higher up, among the mountains. A reference to the map will shew that La Barricade is a narrow defile, upon the side of the torrent : it is fenced in by steep rocks, and at the spot where the rocks were supposed to leave too wide a passage, a strong wall of flints was thrown up, to add to the natural strength of the position, and so contrived, that one opening only was left, by which the retreating party might escape to the fastnesses behind it.

Angrogna was formerly so often the retreat of the Vaudois,

when they were forced to abandon San Giovanni, La Torre, and Villaro, that several geographers, who were ignorant of the true divisions of the country, have spoken of the valley of Angrogna as the principal district of the community. The Marquess de Fleuri, in the cruel persecution of the middle of the seventeenth century, met with so many warm receptions from the peasants of Angrogna, that he declared he would never attack the heretics in this quarter again, with less than 10,000 men.

The weather was favourable to our excursion, which could be made on foot only; for there is no approaching these higher regions in any sort of vehicle; and saddle-horses for a large party cannot easily be procured. There is a road from San Giovanni to the village of Angrogna, which is practicable for small "chars a bœuf;" but nobody would think of riding in such awkward machines as these. It was the first time of our ascending the mountains, and of penetrating into the heart of those seclusions, which have such charms for the imagination; and we set out in high spirits upon the expedition. Pomaretto is much less out of the common track of travellers, than Angrogna; and may be seen from the road to France from Pinerolo; but nothing less than a visit to the spot itself, is likely to conduct to the retired habitations of which we were now in search.

Upon leaving La Torre and the vale of the Pelice, we came to a smooth and level piece of grass-land, at the foot of a chain of heights, which divides two valleys; and there we crossed the torrent, and took the direction of the valley to the right. The ascent soon became more and more abrupt; and the path-way at one time wound up the mountain in the midst of chesnut and walnut trees, whose aged trunks and branching arms have perhaps afforded shelter to many a persecuted fugitive. At other times we suddenly emerged from gigantic fragments of rock, that had rolled from the steeps above, and covered whole tracts of

ground with their ruins, and found ourselves walking over well cultivated plots of corn-land, which extended to the brink of precipices, and made us wonder what industrious hand could have made grain to spring up on such repulsive soil. Ridges of wheat were seen, where every inch of earth on which it grew, was brought by hand from a distance, and spread upon the stony surface.

Rousseau's beautiful and almost poetical image of the sudden change from the bare and barren, to the smiling and productive, was brought before our eyes in frequent succession during this delightful walk ; and what *he* fancied, *we* really saw. " *Quelque-fois en sortant d'un gouffre une agréable prairie rejouissoit tout à coup mes regards. Un melange étonnant de la nature sauvage, et de la nature cultivée montrait par-tout la main des hommes, où l'on eût crut qu'ils n'avoient jamais pénétré : a côté d'une caverne on trouvoit des maisons ; on voyait des pampres secs où l'on n'eût cherché que des ronces, des vignes dans des terres éboulées, et des champs dans des précipices.*"

Nothing however added more to the cheerfulness of the landscape, than the streams of water that ran gently down the slopes, or rushed impetuously from the heights ; some of them murmuring in cascades, which sparkled in the sun ; and others roaring and foaming in cataracts. There were two or three water-courses of a very novel appearance ; at first sight they looked as if they were artificial ; but, upon inspection, we discovered, that they had made a sort of natural channel for themselves in the sides of the mountain, and were winding their way like our path, and flowing into the valley. A rich foliage was all that was requisite to complete the beauty of the scenery ; but, as a substitute for this, we had the fringy particles of frost, that hung upon many of the trees. The melody of the Sabbath bell of Angrogna, which was above us, answered by that of La Torre below, re-

echoed from one side of the ridge of mountains to the other, and produced a very pleasing and solemn effect.

In the summer, when these pastoral people are tending their cattle at a distance from the villages, and occupying their *châlets*, or temporary cabins, upon the summits of the mountain, the clearness of the atmosphere allows the sound of the same Sabbath bells to reach them, calling them to the worship of the Creator beneath the canopy of heaven. It must be a most gratifying and impressive sight to see them hastening from different quarters, and assembling in a convenient place on the green turf, to listen to the exhortations of their ministers, who follow them on every seventh day to their remotest pasturages. They generally select a sort of natural amphitheatre, where they may be shaded from the rays of the sun, and hear their pastor the more distinctly. A congregation, collected on such spots as these, must give rise to some of the most sublime feelings, which man is capable of entertaining. The simple and amiable character of the people, their patriarchal occupation of watching their flocks, their temporary migration, and change of settlement, their contentment and tranquil enjoyment, without any thing to vary their pleasures, the grand and stupendous scenery by which they are surrounded, and the pure air that they breathe in these elevated regions, offer endless subjects for meditation. If pure happiness can be said to exist on earth, it must be amongst these people, whose wishes are limited by their powers of acquirement, and who know of no pleasures but those which are to be found amongst their mountains. Poets and romancers have imagined, that the nearer we approach the ethereal atmosphere, the farther we are removed from the tyranny of those grosser sentiments, which bind us down to earth: and perhaps not without justice. The mountaineer is more virtuous, not only as he is removed from the vices of society, but as he is brought more closely in

contact with nature, and, in that, to the adoration of the Deity ; the still voice of religion is but faintly heard amidst the crowds of life, but it is loud upon the mountains, where the grandeur of the work bears a visible and continued testimony to the grandeur of the Creator.

Happily for the Vaudois, this feeling is with them in its greatest purity ; and we may find a sufficient reason for their contented happiness, in the sincerity of their religion. All their pastors agree in enforcing the same belief and hopes, and the same duties. Their faith is without fanaticism, and their religious opinions are maintained without strife or division. The end of Christian teaching with them, "is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

Upon our arrival at the village of Angrogna, which is picturesquely situated on the slope of the mountain, we went directly to the presbytery of M. Paul Goante, to whom we were introduced by our friend, M. Vertu. He had but just finished his dinner, after performing service at two churches, at Angrogna, and at a hamlet two miles farther up among the mountains. The house is a long narrow building, constructed in the humble style of Alpine habitations, and not unlike the Swiss cottages, with two galleries in front, which open into the different apartments. It is formed of wood and stone, the materials which the country furnishes, and these arranged without any regard to beauty. For the general purposes of comfort and accommodation, it is but very little better than the presbytery of M. Rodolphe Peyrani, at Pomaretto. The worthy pastor, whose age appeared to be about fifty-five, was sitting, with his wife, in a small bed-room, where there was no fire, and received us with that kindness and entire freedom from restraint, so peculiar to this simple race. There were no apologies for the want of better articles of furniture, or for not having the means of giving the