

**NOTES OF A TOUR IN THE
VALLEYS OF PIEDMONT,
IN THE SUMMER OF 1854**

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THE Vaudois or Waldenses occupy several valleys on the eastern declivities of a chain of mountains which connects the Alps of Savoy and Switzerland with the maritime Alps of Piedmont. They have never yielded to the unscriptural claims of the Church of Rome: but, during those ages of sin and folly in which the Roman Pontiffs reached the zenith of their power, they maintained Evangelical doctrine, and faithfully resisted Papal usurpations. For this they have been sentenced to extermination by Papal bulls; successive armies have been sent to slaughter them; they have been mangled, tortured, and murdered. No Churches have suffered so much as they have: and through all their sufferings they have maintained their protest on behalf of Evangelical

truth against the corruptions of the Church of Rome to this day. In the beginning of this century, indeed, they fell into false doctrine, and lost almost all spiritual religion. But God has by his grace restored them in a measure; their pastors generally are now faithful men; religion is growing among them, and they seem likely to be useful to the whole of Piedmont. Having, since I first read their history, felt much interest in their welfare, it was with great pleasure that I set out from Paris, July 13th, with my friend, Mr. Roussel, to visit them. We hoped that he would be able to do them some good, with the blessing of God, by preaching in their parishes; and we further wished to learn whether the Evangelical Continental Society, from which we went as a Deputation, can promote the evangelization of Piedmont by its contributions through them as its medium.

Thursday evening, July 13th, at eight o'clock, Mr. Roussel and I left Paris by the Lyons Railway, and reached Macon at five o'clock. At half-past six we left Macon in the diligence and reached Geneva at eight o'clock in the evening. The road has many interesting features. The Lakes of Nantua and of Silan, by which it passes, are placed amidst beautiful mountains; the valley of the Rhone, near Bellegarde, is deep and narrow; and near it is the Loss of the Rhone (Perte du Rhone), where the river, when low,

plunges beneath the rocks, and runs for some distance along a subterranean channel. The Fort de l'Ecluse, which entirely commands the valley at the point where it stands, is exceedingly picturesque; and, as the road approaches Geneva, Mont Blanc comes into sight. On the evening of our arrival it was unclouded, clear, and rosy; and gave us a bright welcome to the city of the blue and "arrowy" Rhone.

On Monday, 17th, we left Geneva at half-past six o'clock. The day was fine, and enabled us to enjoy a succession of beautiful views along the road. The wooded lake of Annecy invites the traveller to explore its banks; Aix stands in a very pretty country; and Chambéry is embosomed in fine mountains. We reached this latter place about four o'clock, and there had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of M. Hudry Menos, editor of the "Savoyard Gleaner" ("Glaneur Savoyard"), who seems to be doing much good in Savoy. Some years since, when Dr. Malan stopped at Sallenche, on his way to Mont Blanc, he was arrested, because he had distributed some evangelical tracts, carried before the magistrate at Bonneville, and thence escorted by four gendarmes to the frontiers. At that time not a new testament could be safely given away, and no Protestant worship was allowed either to the English or French at Chamouni. At Sallenche, I found in the market on sale medals consecrated to Mary,

which some Catholics wear, as Africans do their fetiches, to keep off evil; and such superstitious tales as "The Apparition of the Virgin to the Two Children at La Salette."

Now, M. Hudry Menos publishes an Evangelical journal, which has about 200 Roman Catholic subscribers. But this has not been without opposition.

The priests of Savoy, through their journals, "The Echo of Mont Blanc," and "The Courier of the Alps," have endeavoured to repress the growth of religious inquiry by statements like the following:—"English zeal, identified with Mazzinianism, extends itself in Piedmont with diabolic skill and constancy. There it is not content with preaching revolt as an unprescriptible right and assassination as a sacred duty." "Protestantism in our day is no longer a doctrine,—it is an immense revolt; it is, like its worthy associate democracy, a machine of war against religious and civil authority."—ECHO.

"Does John Bull wish to make us Methodists (*Momiers*)? He has too much sense to push his pretensions so far. A corpse cannot conquer; it can only kill by the pestilential exhalations which it diffuses. Such is exactly the present state of Protestantism, and such the only effects which it can produce." "Are we wrong in saying that the convention which raised altars to the goddess Reason was only a faithful scion of Pro-

testantism?" "What is Protestantism, if not a religious revolution in permanence,—a perpetual revolt of pride against the most sacred authority, that of God and of his Church. It is nothing but a universal protestation of error and of evil against truth, virtue, and religion." "It is a dissolvent doctrine, which makes God an executioner and man a machine; which urges us to vice with one hand, and with the other points us to heaven as its recompense. For it there is no good or evil, vice or virtue: these are but accidents, of which God is the sole cause; murder is as divine as charity."—*COURIER*.

But words are not their only weapons. For replying, in his journal, to these charges, Mr. Menos was brought before the Court of Appeal at Chambéry, September, 1853; and, although ably defended by his counsel, Mr. Curt-comte, was sentenced to a fine of 300 francs and to imprisonment for 100 days. More recently, also, his publisher, Mr. Jeandet, was brought before the magistrate "for holding opinions contrary to the religion of the State," and was condemned to a fine of 300 francs and imprisonment for six days. Persecution, however, has defeated the ends of his persecutors; for when he was thrown into prison for having preached the Gospel by his writings to the public, he preached it by his voice to the prisoners. When forbidden by the governor to do so, he acted in the spirit of the

apostles, who met a similar prohibition by saying to the priests of Jerusalem, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye;" and he continued to preach to them. Several of these prisoners, at their release, came to his house for New Testaments; and 230 Bibles and Testaments have been sold in the province of Faucigny by colporteurs under his superintendence. He is a grave, sensible, and earnest man. Affliction and thought have, through the grace of God, moderated the impetuosity of youth; and he seems to be firm without imprudence, and zealous without bitterness. Patient perseverance in well-doing has lessened the contempt and resentment which, at his first profession of Evangelical truth, he was called to bear. Then he was hooted by children in the street, and old friends crossed over the way to avoid him. Now these vexations have ceased: for his writings, though they continue to be as Evangelical as before, he is no longer molested; besides circulating about 1,600 copies of his "Gleaner," he has established a public "Evangelical Library" in a good street in the centre of the city; and he has opened a small room for Protestant worship. It appears to me that he ought to be aided in his important labors. Those who wish to promote the knowledge of the Gospel in Savoy, a country which is behind Piedmont in knowledge and in freedom of thought, will do