

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

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TWO SIDES TO A SAINT.*

BY LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.

I.

THE titles given below are far from representing all that has lately been published in England on the subject of St. Francis de Sales. The amount and character of this literature indicate a degree of reverent interest in that remarkable man almost amounting to a new *cultus*. The feeling is manifested, not only by the authors of these books (in whom something is to be pardoned to the enthusiasm of biography), but also by the readers and critics, that in the person of "the Apostle of the Chablais," we have a type of sanctified humanity quite superior to anything that can be expected from the English stock, and which mere Protestantism cannot attain unto. Now

there is nothing but good to be said of the naturalization of foreign saints, provided only it be done with discretion and fidelity to historic truth. But there is large scope here for the function of the *avvocato del diavolo*; and we are bound to say of all these books that they are wholly negligent of this duty. The Francis de Sales whom they present to us is neither the legendary Francis nor the historical Francis. The blaze of color which characterizes the legend is toned down to suit the English taste, though no attempt is made to correct the drawing. Not even Lady Herbert's *Mission in the Chablais* ventures to reproduce that wild profusion of miracle, and those unctuous details concerning the saint's resistance to temptation, in which his panegyrists so much delight. Not even the author of *A Dominican Artist*, in whose writings appear so many indications of industry and good taste, ventures on anything, with regard to the facts of her hero's life, but a servile though distant and timid following of the Roman Catholic tradition.

It is not necessary to go beyond Francis's own letters and the documents of his friends and partisans for the materials for correcting these distorted representations; and it is not creditable to intelligent writers who have had these materials under their eyes, to persist in repeating the old fiction as truth. A less labor-saving course would not only be more honorable to themselves, and more just to their readers, but it would not be in all respects disadvantageous to their hero. He would doubtless lose some rays of the halo that envelops him; he might be constrained to descend a step or two from that lofty pedestal on which he seems sometimes to be consciously posing for a saint; and certainly there would be some qualifying of that preternatural sweetness which (to the Protestant taste) approaches now and then the very verge of

* *St. Francis de Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva.* By the author of *A Dominican Artist*. Rivingtons, 1876.
A Selection from the Spiritual Letters of St. Francis de Sales. Translated by the same author. Rivingtons, 1871.

The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales. By Jean Pierre Camus, Bishop of Belley. Translated by the same author. Rivingtons, 1873.

The Mission of St. Francis of Sales in the Chablais. By Lady Herbert. Bentley, 1868.

Selections from the Letters of St. Francis de Sales. Translated from the French by Mrs. C. W. Bagot. Revised by a Priest of the English Church. Masters, 1871.

The "Salesian" literature in French, always voluminous, has received unusual increments of late, in consequence of the project, just accomplished, for constituting St. Francis a "doctor of the Church."

This historical essay, written at Geneva, was published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, London, for September, 1878, and has since been reissued as a pamphlet at Lausanne, Switzerland, with the consent both of author and of publishers.

On its first appearance, it was the subject of very serious attention in England and America, from critics of very different schools. The *London Academy* declared it to be "one of the most telling and vigorous pieces of historical criticism that we have met with for a long time," and concluded, "in a word, this article is one which the apologists of St. Francis and his 'sweetness' will do well to answer. If they pass it by, the world may well be excused for believing that it is unanswerable." In like manner, the *London Church Times*, from the opposite point of view, representing the party that has been devoted to the cult of St. Francis, recognized the seriousness of the issue, and came to the same conclusion "unless Mr. Bacon's article is answered, we shall have to give up St. Francis de Sales."

Well, more than sixteen years have passed, and the article is still "unanswered because unanswerable;" but we are still waiting for indications that this prostrate and discredited idol, so

"Lopp'd, maim'd and batter'd on the grundsel edge," is any the less an object of veneration to its English votaries.

mawkishness; but whatever his portrait might lose in heroic dimensions and in the air of sanctity, not to say sanctimony, it would gain in human interest and probability. In the early pages of his biography, we should miss that solemn little prig described in the bull of canonization as having "shown when a child none of the traits of childhood," and in the eulogy of Father Morel as "having manifested in the cradle such chaste modesty as to shrink from the caresses of his nurse, and hardly permit her to kiss him;"* and in the later chapters we should part with more regret from the figure of "the Apostle of the Chablais," taking his life in his hand and encountering the lofty mountains of the Chablais, its frightful precipices, its eternal winters, its ferocious beasts and still more savage inhabitants, opposing the malignity and heresy of the latter only with the arms of love and meekness, and with the eloquent preaching of the true faith, until "at last, his gentleness triumphed over their brutality, his love over their hate, his patience over their fury, his constancy to serve them over their obstinacy."† But we should get in exchange a most interesting and racy character, with a great deal of human nature in it, a genial *bonhomie*, a bright wit, a love of society, especially that of cultivated ladies; a taste and talent for diplomacy of the sort that approaches intrigue; and an unaffected ardor of mystical devotion combining and co-operating with a practical shrewdness which made him a capital adviser of the pious but sentimental ladies who were his favorite correspondents, but which proved a dangerous gift to a man who had been taught by one of the most eminent Jesuits ‡ connected with the affair of St. Bartholomew's Day, to make an unscrupulous use of it for the greater glory of God.

It is no wonder that a mind constituted like that of Francis should give early evidence of a vocation to the ecclesiastical career. It is not difficult to believe the story told of him that when other children were playing soldiers, he would be playing church, and leading about the little peasants in a procession instead of a battalion; nor that when he returned to his father's castle at Thôrens in Savoy, from his costly education at Paris and Padua, an accomplished and brilliant young man of twenty-five, he should already have set before himself the position

of Bishop and Prince of Geneva* as a more congenial one than any he would be likely to attain in the profession of arms, or in the career which his father's ambition had marked out for him, of country gentleman and senator of Savoy.

The story of the disappointment of the father's plans is told by the most voluminous and authoritative of the saint's biographers, the Abbé Marsollier, with *naïveté* characteristic of that class of writers. Soon after Francis's return home, his father announced that he had arranged a marriage for him with a charming young heiress in the neighborhood, daughter to the Baron de Végy. "It struck the young count like a thunderbolt," says the biographer, who has been dwelling with delight on the early vows of celibacy which the young student had made in his private devotions; and yet not so much like a thunderbolt after all, but that he was quite willing to ride over to castle Végy and take a look at the young lady. In fact, a sense of respect for his father's wishes, or something, led him to call often on Mlle. de Végy, until *her* feelings, at least, had become very tenderly engaged. "This young lady" (we quote from the biography of Loyau d'Amboise) "no longer concealed from him how dear he had become to her. She never looked on him without an indefinable smile that bespoke the feelings of her soul. Not more soft were Rachel's sighs for Jacob, not more tender the looks with which she greeted his return to the roof of Laban after charming away the fatigues of the day with thoughts of her." To the great satisfaction of both families the affair was looked upon as settled. Mutual congratulations were exchanged, and in the château de Sales they began to choose the place for the bride's portrait, and to talk about the arrangements for the wedding party. But either the young count had changed his mind in the course of the wooing, or, as his biographers proudly assert, he never had had the slightest intention of marrying the girl at all. At all events, while this billing and cooing was going on, the young saint was in consultation with his cousin Louis, canon of the chapter of Geneva, to get him neatly out of the affair, which was managed by securing for him from the Pope the most brilliant ecclesiastical appointment in the diocese, that of provost of the cathedral, that had just fallen vacant. Not till the document that secured him this prize was fairly in his hand, did Francis take any step that

* *Canonisation de St. François de Sales en 16 discours.* Grenoble, 1665.

† See that tremendous piece of pulpit eloquence the *Oration of Bottini*, Consistorial Advocate, at the canonization of Francis, transcribed in full by Father Morel.

‡ Father Possevin, author of the *Soldat Chrétien*.

* So the Abbé Marsollier, *Vie de St. François*, livre I.

could compromise his hopeful relations with Mlle. de Végy. The disappointment, mortification and shame of his parents, when he came to them in company with his cousin, the canon, showing the brief of nomination, and announcing his intention to accept it, are described with exultation by his panegyrists. His mother, with her woman's heart, pleaded tenderly for the forsaken girl. "Think," she said, "of her distress when she finds that you have jilted her, and that she is repelled by the heart that should have been her refuge and her love. Bitter will be her tears, for she has given you her heart *without the slightest mistrust*." There was nothing to be alleged in answer to this appeal but his vow and his vocation, reinforced by certain miraculous indications of duty that were conclusive to his own conscience, but which, in the crude judgment of a man of the world, it would have been better to have forgotten altogether than to have recollected only at that stage of the affair. His mother, who seems to have a very clear view of the matter, merely answered: "This vow of yours was a very fine impulse; but you know just as well as I do that you could be released from it by a single word of the Bishop of Geneva."*

This incident in the life of Francis has no adequate justice done to it in the English biographies; but by the Abbé Marsollier and by Loyau d'Amboise it is detailed as a heroic instance of sacrifice for conscience' sake. In reading it, however, one can hardly resist the thought how near the young saint might have been, at the time, to a premature martyrdom to his principles; that if Mlle. de Végy had happened to have a big brother, the bodily sufferings of Francis for his devotion to the Church might have begun before he had so much as entered on his apostolic work among the fierce Protestants of the Chablais.

It is no more than justice to the memory of the saint, to say that this seems to have been the most serious of the indiscretions into which he fell in his relations with the fair sex. The excessive protestations, on the part of himself and his clerical eulogists, of a very exceptional virtue in this regard, and his too frequent occasions for hand-to-hand encounter with temptation, such as do not usually occur to honest gentlemen who keep temptation at a proper distance, suggest suspicions for which there

is no corroboration. He was eminently a ladies' man, "for ever surrounded by women;"* and he was evidently disposed by nature to a sort of coquetry, against which he doubtless strove to guard himself. The mild terms of almost playful rebuke with which he answers letters of amorous adulation are in bad taste; but bad taste is not always sinful, whatever Mr. Ruskin may say. The bishop writes, for instance, in 1618, to one of these enthusiastic adorers: "Dearest girl of my heart, I want to tell you that I have a child who writes to me that, being separated from me has thrown her into distress; that if she did not restrain her eyes they would shed tears over my departure, as the sky sheds rain, and other fine things of the sort. But she goes beyond this, and says that I am not a mere man, but some divinity sent on earth to compel us to love and admire him; and she even adds that she would use still stronger language if she dared. Now, my child, what do you think of that? Isn't it very naughty to talk so? Isn't it extravagant language?"† etc. Let him that is without sin rebuke the genial, warm-hearted bachelor bishop for not dropping that sort of letter into the fire unanswered, or for not answering it sharply. Our censure, if we should venture upon any, would be reserved for the editor who, in culling from the voluminous masses of the saint's correspondence, materials for a Complete Religious Letter-writer for English clergymen and their fair parishioners, should, out of so much that is admirable, have selected this one. It is withal an injustice to the character of Francis, who, in very trying circumstances, proved himself, we honestly think, as pure as the average of Protestant ministers—and that is high praise.

Of course no one will justify everything in his affair with Mme. de Chantal. We will not deny that a miraculous revelation from heaven‡ may justify, in extreme cases, a fascinating clergyman of thirty-seven in cultivating a platonico-religious intimacy with an extraordinarily beautiful widow of thirty-two. But no case could justify the parties in clandestine correspondence such as took place at the outset of this acquaintance. It was June 14, 1604, that Francis wrote to the Baroness de Chantal: "Since your father-director permits you to write me sometimes, I beg you will do so freely and heartily. It will be an act of charity. My

* See the *Lives of the Saint* by the two authors cited. The complacency with which they tell the story so as to show all the essential facts, and yet without a suspicion that there is anything but heroism in their hero's course, is wonderful.

* *Spirit of St. Francis*, III., i, § 24, Ed. Rivingtons.

† Lettre à une dame, du 22 avril, 1618. P. 82 of the volume of Messrs. Rivingtons. Ed. Blaise, 418.

‡ Francis himself makes no pretence of the heavenly vision.

present circumstances and occupation make me an object of compassion. To hear from persons like you refreshes me like dew. The length of this letter shows you how my mind relishes intercourse with yours.* *This* letter was intended to be shown freely to her father and to her confessor, and contained expressions highly gratifying to their feelings. Ten days later it was followed by a strictly confidential letter, tending to supplant the influence of both these gentlemen by his own. "My last letter," he says, "will help you to quiet the mind of the good father to whom you ask leave to show it. I stuffed it well with things calculated to forestall any suspicion on his part that it was written with design;" and he goes on to urge her by the example of St. Teresa, not to limit her confidences to her confessor, but to accept him, Francis, in a more intimate and spiritual relation.† We really believe that much good came of this friendship with Mme. Chantal, especially as the parties grew older; and that no serious harm came of it, beyond some temporary distress in the family of President Frémiot, a revolting and fatal "marriage of convenience," and a certain amount of duplicity, and of unwholesome excitement in both the bishop and the baroness growing out of their unnatural relation. The affair turned out much better than it began. If any document nearly as scandalous as the letter above quoted had been produced in a recent *cause célèbre* in which the character of one of the most famous of modern preachers was at issue, it would have gone hard with him before the jury. We will not say more than that our saint was indiscreet; but it is impossible to say less: and the disposition to dodges and intrigues illustrated by this incident throws a light on other portions of his history which it would not be honest to refuse to accept.

The character in which Francis has had least justice done him by the publications commonly current is that of *Missionary*. His greatest achievement, the conversion of the Chablais, is related copiously and effusively by Lady Herbert and more briefly by the author of *A Dominican Artist*. But the substance of the story, as they tell it, may be condensed into a few words. Being sent as a young man to destroy by his preaching the Protestant heresy that had become rooted in the province of the Chablais, he devoted himself to this task, in the face of excessive dangers and hardships, re-

fusing military aid and protection, for the space of four years. The force of his arguments, the persuasiveness of his eloquence, the meekness and gentleness of his life, the sweetness of his disposition, his forgiving love towards his enemies, and the miracles that were wrought by him, overcame the bitter prejudices of the Protestants, who came to him in thousands to abjure their errors, until, by the influence of his ministry, the whole population of the province was won to the Church, and heresy completely extirpated.*

Thus runs the story; but the biographies of the saint, even in the mitigated form in which they are delivered to the British public, enrich this outline with magnificent colors. We are led by them through a bewildering haze of fictions and exaggerations. The project of canonizing Francis was entertained even before his death, and the work of procuring proofs of his sanctity was diligently begun by his influential family. The miracles of the saint are boldly compared to those of the Saviour of mankind, and under the one head of the raising of the dead are declared to be fully equal to those of the divine model.† But the wonders wrought by Francis himself are far below those effected by the imagination of his eulogists. Not only do they multiply the population of the province tenfold, but they change the face of nature and create new heavens and a new earth for the scene of their hero's exploits. The charming plain on the southern shore of Lake Lemman, fenced from harsh winds by magnificent walls of mountain, where fig trees grow in the open gardens, and the gravest of the winter hardships is the rarity of a week's skating, becomes an awful wilderness in which "eternal winter" reigns, such as Salvator Rosa loved to paint. The quiet, good-humored peasants are transformed into fierce assassins, ambushed in every hedge; and the stalwart young apostle, "one of the best built men of his time," flush of money and resources of every kind, backed by the treasury and army of Savoy, and perhaps the best protected man in Europe, is

* The most condensed summary of the fictitious legend of Francis de Sales is perhaps the Bull of Canonization, which may be found in the Appendix of the *Life* by Loyau d'Amboise.

† The original *Life of Francis*, published by his nephew Auguste, about ten years after the apostle's death, concludes thus, with almost inconceivable bad taste: "It is that son and nephew that Francis loved that testifies of these things, and he knoweth that his witness is true. And many other things did Francis de Sales, which are not written in this book, which, if they were written, I believe that the world would not contain them." But it is a notable fact that with the single exception of the casting out of devils, not one of these miracles is mentioned or alluded to by Francis himself.

* Letter of June 14, 1604. No. 58.

† Letter 59.

changed into a suffering martyr, confronting daily deaths with heroic resignation, and answering the warnings and entreaties of his friends with a calm, patient smile. Everything becomes heroic. For better security, he takes his lodging at the castle of Allinges, on a pretty knoll of rock commanding a delicious landscape, where he is the petted guest of the commandant; and we are invited to admire the fortitude of this stout, active young fellow of twenty-seven in that he actually takes the hour's walk into town on foot.* He has chilblains, and we hear (in the panegyrics) the gurgling of the blood as it gushes through his stockings and gaiters and stains his footprints in the snow. A bridge being broken, he crosses the stream on a plank; and his biographers roll their pious eyes and lift up adoring hands in admiration of the miracle. Later in his career, when as bishop he visits the valleys of Chamounix and Sixt, his admirers will not be content unless we join in their wonder at the sublime courage and self-denial with which he adventures himself in those dreadful places whither it is the delight of tourists from all the lands of the earth to follow him.†

When Francis de Sales entered on his mission in the Chablais, in September, 1594, that region had been Protestant for fifty-eight years. Thirty years before, in 1564, it had been receded to Savoy by the Bernese, in the treaty of Nyon, with the stipulation that the exercise of the Protestant religion therein should not only not be molested, but should be protected and maintained by the Catholic sovereign — a stipulation allowed for the express reason that the people of the ceded province were so heartily attached to their faith that it would be impossible to detach them from it without great violence. Under this treaty the Chablais abode in peace and prosperity for sixteen years, until the death of the just and liberal-minded Duke who made the treaty, and the accession of his son, Charles Emmanuel, a prince the depth of whose religious convictions is indicated by his declaration that he held it to be "the duty of a good Christian to fight the Genevese, all pledges and oaths to the contrary notwithstanding." His deed was

as good as his word. Plots of treachery and secret violence against the heretic city succeeded each other so frequently that at last the magistrates decided that a state of open war was better than such a peace; and in 1589 war was declared by the little town against its powerful and warlike neighbor — a war that horribly devastated the entire neighborhood, and drained Geneva of blood and treasure, but left it covered with glory and strong in religious faith. In the course of this war, Thonon, the capital of the Chablais, being attacked by the Genevese with their Swiss and French allies, surrendered, doubtless with small regret on the part of its Protestant population. When, at the beginning of an unstable peace, in 1694, the treaty of Nyon was reaffirmed, the Duke did not forget the coldness of the people of Thonon in the war against their fellow-believers, and had not long to wait for an opportunity of revenge.

That very year the Duke resolved to convert the Chablais. The time was well chosen. The people had suffered miserably in the war, and had little heart to resist injustice; the Protestant pastors had been harried out of the country, and only three or four of them allowed to return; public worship had ceased in most of the villages, and the children were growing up without instruction; little heroic Geneva crouched behind her walls, panting in utter exhaustion; and what was more to the purpose, Berne, the other party to the treaty of Nyon, that had the right, under its terms, to insist on the maintenance of the stipulation in favor of the Protestant religion, had shown very plainly that she had no more stomach for fighting on account of others, so that there was little danger of any hindrance growing out of that document, unless it were, peradventure, some scruple of honor on the Duke's part, or some diplomatic remonstrance from Berne.

Accordingly the Duke sent a letter to the old Bishop of Geneva, at Annecy, asking him to send missionaries into the Chablais, and promising to aid them in their work with the whole force of his authority, to give them commissions accrediting them as employed in the ducal service, and to charge all commandants of posts to help the work to the utmost of their power. Perhaps the history of Christian missions has never offered an opening with so many attractions to an enterprising and devoted clergyman, and so few drawbacks, as that now presented to the brilliant and active young Provost of the chapter. Francis volunteered at once, and started for his mission-field without

* In the *Life* by Loyau d'Amboise, the one league stretches to three "that the fatigue may touch hard hearts," p. 70, 72.

† Francis was a lover of natural beauty (see *Sainte Beuve, Port Royal*, I, 218) and fully capable of enjoying the magnificent scenery of his diocese. Mr. Gaberel, the venerable historian of Geneva, makes the curious remark in his work on *Rousseau et les Genevois*, that the earliest mention to be found in extant literature of the natural beauties of the region of the Lemman is in Auguste de Sales' life of his uncle.

delay, accompanied by his cousin Louis, the canon.

He had every imaginable advantage for success in his enterprise—young, handsome, ardent and enthusiastic, noble of birth, bold and persevering, sustained by family influence that gave him admission to all the best society of the province, peculiarly insinuating in the society of ladies, quick-witted, diplomatic and adroit, rarely losing his temper in controversy, but maintaining the imperturbable suavity of his manner even when his practical operations were of the severest and cruellest; he was at the same time a man of strong convictions—strong, that is, with the strength that comes of an obstinate and conscientious resolution never to ponder an objection; * of graceful though effeminate eloquence; of intense mystical piety; and what proved in the end to be of even greater importance to his undertaking—a versatile readiness in applying means to ends without being embarrassed by squeamish scruples of honor and conscience. Leaving out of consideration the alleged miracles by which his work was aided, it might almost be said that if a man so gifted and so favored should not be successful in a good cause, it would be itself a miracle as great as some of those ascribed to him in the act of canonization.

Naturally, the mission organized under such auspices directed itself at once to the fortress of Allinges, the headquarters of the military governor of the province, from which, by means of a powerful garrison, he held in subjection not only the neighboring city of Thonon, but the whole of the harassed and wasted province. To him the missionaries presented their letters from the Duke enjoining him to render them all the protection and support in his power. The governor was just the man for the occasion. A good Catholic, a zealous subject, a brave and cruel soldier, the Baron d'Hernance was also a family connection and an old personal friend of the Apostle. A plan of campaign was soon settled. They were to begin with the mildest measures, reserving the use of violence as a last resort. † This was a course both congenial to the feelings of Francis, and in accordance with the ideas of the Duke, who was not without fears lest his perfidy should provoke the Bernese to armed interference. The old soldier further advised the missionaries that it would be safer for them to spend their nights at the fort.

The people of the Chablais, so he assured them, were a good-natured, simple, rude sort of folk, but very obstinate when they had made up their minds; they had a very bad opinion of the Roman Church, and were convinced that their liberties and privileges depended on their holding fast to their religion—a notion that proved to be not far from right. The next morning the mission was appropriately inaugurated by a review of the troops, and the governor, pointing to his force of artillery, remarked significantly to Francis: "If the Huguenots over there will give you a hearing, I hope we shall have no need to use these guns.*"

Advancing bravely from his fortified base, Francis presented himself to the magistrates of Thonon with letters commanding them to render all possible services to the missionaries, and to attend upon their preaching, and warning them that any injury offered to the priests would be avenged on the whole city of Thonon. The impression thus made may have been salutary, but the mild and inoffensive ways of Francis gave little provocation to violence. The presence of two such commissioners as he and his cousin naturally provoked a temporary agitation in the town, which, however, soon subsided, and the mission went on quietly but diligently. He was free to use the great church of St. Hippolyte, and there, day by day, he gathered the little handful of about a dozen Catholics, mostly strangers, to hear him preach. It was natural to expect that the uncommon attractions of the man himself, and the prodigious combination of influences by which he was backed, would at least win now and then a straggling townsman or peasant to listen to the famous preacher. But it was not so. He bewails his disappointment in successive letters. "We had hoped that some would come to hear us, either out of curiosity or out of some lingering love for the old religion. But they have all resolved, with mutual exhortations, not to do it." ‡—"Their heart is hardened. They have said to God: We will not serve thee. They will not hear us, because they will not hear God." And yet the governor had been as good as his word, and used his personal persuasions to induce persons to hear the Apostle. But the result is summed up by

* Thus the biographers generally; but the quotation is mitigated by English editors. Cf. Bull of Canonization. § 15.

† This and the following citations are from his letters of this period. In one of them Francis alleges that a municipal law was made forbidding attendance on his sermons. But this is very unlikely. In the Ed. Blaise (Paris, 1821) the letters may be found in chronological order.

* See, for a single instance, letter XI, p. 57. Ed. Rivingtons.

† Marsollier, livre II.

Francis in these words: "I have been preaching at Thonon now seven months on every holiday, and often in the week besides. I have never been heard but by three or four of the Huguenots, and these only came four or five times except secretly." Having utterly failed in drawing the people to hear him, he went down among the people, and taking his stand in the public square on market-days, attempted to catch their attention whether they would or no. This was equally in vain. The peasants were as obdurate as the citizens. In the country villages they refused not only to hear him, but even to give him so much as a lodging on payment. At the end of a year's toil, wishing to draw together all the results of his mission, he announced far and wide that he would preach on St. Stephen's day in a church near the Allinges. The concourse consisted of seven persons. Up to this time Thonon had not furnished a single convert. The father of Francis wrote to him that all the wisest and most sensible people considered his further persistence in the mission as a mere tempting of Providence, and that the only way to bring back such heretics to the faith was by the mouth of the canon.

Nevertheless, with admirable persistence, Francis resolved to keep at it for another year, concentrating all his efforts on the town of Thonon. Already he had made use of the press to circulate his doctrines in little tracts and broadsides. He now devoted himself to discussions, private and public, and to the preparation of a book in exposition of Catholic doctrine. The aim of his teaching, both oral and printed, was characteristic of the man. It was conciliatory, dwelling on the points of resemblance between the two Churches, rather than on the points of difference, and seeking to produce the impression that the change from Protestant to Catholic, which would be attended by such vast worldly advantages, was not so difficult a matter as some were disposed to think. It was charged against him by some of his own brethren that he was not honest in this matter; and it is either very fortunate or very unfortunate for his reputation as a Catholic saint and doctor, that the book that would have settled the question—the book above mentioned—should completely and mysteriously have disappeared from the face of the earth.*

(To be continued.)

MONASTICISM: ITS IDEALS AND ITS HISTORY.

II.

BY DR. ADOLF HARNACK,

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(Translated by Rev. Charles R. Gillett, Librarian of Union Theological Seminary.)

At the close of the fourth decade of the fourth century the monastic movement had already become strong. Hermits must have existed by thousands. The beginnings of monasticism proper, like the beginnings of every great historical phenomenon, are enshrouded in myth, so that it is no longer possible to distinguish truth from fiction. Legend alone has preserved the memory of its ostensible founders. Two things we do know, however, and these suffice for a knowledge of the movement in general and for a correct judgment concerning it. We know the original ideal, and we are able to estimate what was included in its world-flight. The original ideal was to attain participation in the pure contemplation of God: the means was absolute renunciation of all the goods of life, yea, even of churchly fellowship. Flight was not simply from the world in every sense of the word, but also from the world-church. Not as though her doctrines were considered insufficient, her regulations inappropriate, or her dispensation of grace unimportant, but her very territory was considered dangerous, and men did not question their ability to retrieve all her sacramental benefits by means of asceticism and constant contemplation of that which was holy.

And the world-church itself, how was she disposed toward this movement? Did she allow her members to emancipate themselves from her direct guidance and to enter upon a way of securing salvation over which she had not the oversight? Did she suffer her sons to cause the shadow of suspicion to fall upon her ordinances regarding life, even if they refrained from attacking them? Never for an instant did she hesitate; she could not. She did the only thing that was left for her protection; she specifically approved of the movement and moreover she gave her testimony that thereby the prototype of the Christian life was actualized. The necessity of losing one's self in the turmoil of existence, disgust with the emptiness of ordinary life, the prospect of a lofty good to be gained, had driven men forth. Out of this necessity the church made in very

* This is all the more remarkable, since with the exception of this important work, every scrap of Francis' writing has been so religiously preserved.

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BY LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.

II.

FINDING townsfolk and peasantry as steadfast as ever in their faith, Francis turned to the provincial gentry. Helplessly dependent as these were on the duke's favor for promotion, whether in a military or in a civil career, it was not difficult to bring strong motives to bear upon them to persuade them to give a hearing to the message of salvation. Among them, the Baron d'Avully, a man of great influence, was the husband of a zealous Catholic lady, a devoted admirer of Francis. Her "prayers and tears," combined with the arguments of the missionary, made a deep impression on this gentleman; but before announcing his conversion he asked to hear a discussion of the points at issue. A meeting was arranged between Francis and Pastor La Faye of Geneva, at which the discussion lasted three hours. The affair being reported only by friends of Francis, it is needless to say that the wretched Protestant was overwhelmed with argument at all points; "frantic with rage, he broke out in a torrent of insulting language." It is again unfortunate that we have no report of the language used; but the papers of a subsequent discussion between the same parties are to be seen in the Library of Geneva, and afford us some ground of conjecture. To his antagonist's argument our saint meekly replies: "Your book is utterly worthless. It is packed with absurdities, lies, and blasphemies. It is the work of a poor, arrogant, broken-winded minister, who has gone crazy with passion and rage; a foolhardy, blind, impudent impostor, a charlatan, a Proteus, a chameleon, an excessively ignorant ex-monk and ex-priest." In answer to these gentle words, the heretic bursts forth with his furious insolence as follows: "I am not a Proteus nor a chameleon; ever since I have known God's truth I have steadfastly followed it. It is a small matter to be judged of man's judg-

ment. We must stand or fall to our own Master, to whom all our service is due. The Christian's fairest ornament is a humble mind. Let him that thinketh himself wise take heed lest he fall." If the above is an accurate report, it is truly painful to see how far the tender, gentle nature of the saint had changed places with such a rude creature as this Geneva pastor.*

Besides d'Avully, there was converted a noted lawyer named Poncet. Of these accessions the utmost was made. D'Avully was honored with a brief from the pope's own hand, couched in the most flattering terms, and assuring the neophyte of the distinguished favors of the duke. But the hopes inspired by these two successes were disappointed. At the end of the second year's toil, the list of converts amounted to just twelve,† and the disgusted apostle declares to the duke: "Your Chablais is a ruined province. Here have I been laboring twenty-seven months in this miserable country; but I have sown among thorns or in stony places. Certainly, except M. d'Avully, and Poncet the lawyer, the rest of the converts are not much to talk of. I pray God for better luck; and I am sure that your highness's piety will not permit all our efforts to be in vain."‡

For many months it had been growing plain to Francis and his friends that measures of a more vigorous sort must be used if anything was to be accomplished. This is the point of his appeal to the duke's piety. A year before, his friend President Favre had condoled with him on the inefficient sup-

*The citations are from Gaberel, *Hist. de l'Eglise de Genève* II, 506. But the later editions of Francis' works are expurgated of insulting words and adapted to the modern taste. *Ibid.* 642.

†The list of them is given in the original *Life* by Auguste de Sales; but according to the current biographies the converts in Thonon alone were long before this to be counted by hundreds. See, for example, Loyau d'Amboise, p. 88.

‡*Discours au Duc de Savoie le 9 décembre 1596.* Œuvres de St. François de Sales. Ed. Blaise, vol. XIV. Opuscules, p. 75.

port he received from the authorities; and the apostle himself had complained to the Jesuit Canisius that "His Serene Highness would not use violence to bring these people back into the Church, on account of the treaty on that point with Berne." But on December 29, 1595, he applies to the duke to have President Favre sent with a commission to compel the citizens to attend his preaching. "This gentle violence," said he, "will I think constrain them to accept the yoke of our holy zeal, and make a great breach in their obstinacy."*

So absolute was the necessity, that, notwithstanding the unfavorable season, he crossed the Alps in November, 1596, for a personal interview with the duke at Turin. The new program for the conversion of the Chablais which he submitted to the duke in council, is reported by Lady Herbert with great "sweetness" as consisting chiefly in "three things: the re-establishment of the mass at Thonon; the restoration of the property belonging to the Church; and the appointment of a certain number of priests and teachers, at fixed revenues throughout the province. He also urged the establishment of seminaries and schools; the prohibition of heretical and atheistical publications; and the foundation of a House of Mercy at Thonon."† Some trifling matters besides are contained in the memorandum of Francis, which have escaped her ladyship's attention, but which we add as an illustration of the saint's business-like ways:

"The minister of Thonon to be sent away to some place where he can have no intercourse with his people.

The heretic schoolmaster to be removed and a Catholic put in his place until the Jesuits can be settled.

Liberalities to be shown towards some seven or eight old persons who have remained Catholic.

Heretics, within a brief time, must be deprived of all public offices, and Catholics appointed into their places.

Good promotion in the army for Catholic young men.

* To this earlier period of the mission belong the stories of attempted assassination from which the saint escapes, sometimes by miracle and sometimes by "sweetness," but always magnificently scorning the protection of the secular arm. There is every reason to believe that they are all falsehoods. Francis never alludes to them. His parents at home did doubtless sidget about the safety of their favorite son. But a letter to him from his friend, President Favre, says: "My only trouble is that your good father worries so for fear some harm will come to you, that I can hardly persuade him that you are perfectly safe, and that, as I believe, there is *not the slightest occasion to suspect danger* for you. I comfort him all I can, often protesting (what I am sure you do not doubt) that I never would have left you if I could have perceived the *slightest danger* to be feared." After Francis' death these assassination stories had a double value, as contributing to the materials of canonization, and as blackening the character of the Protestants.

† *The Mission in the Chablais*, p. 84.

One of the senators to summon all the citizens of Thonon to turn Catholic.

All Protestant books to be burned.

Your highness to show liberality to the new converts.

It is necessary to *scatter terror* through the whole population by wholesome edicts.*

The Council shrank from a policy at once so audacious and so perfidious. But "with his usual sweetness" (as the Abbé Marsollier admirably puts it) the ardent young saint represented that the other party to the treaty was in no condition to enforce his rights; that the conversion was of great political importance; that he would not recommend using *violence* at all; but that "if the Council thought they were going to re-establish Catholicism in the Chablais with only such means as had been used hitherto, they were very much mistaken."

The Council were not convinced. Perhaps, indeed, the clergyman had failed to see the point of their scruples. But the duke, whose conscience was not over nice, had been won to Francis' policy in advance. He cleared the Council Chamber with a *sic volo, sic jubeo*, and the saint returned to his spiritual labors in triumph.

The first use which he made of his new powers must, we fear, be described as characteristic. Secretly, without communicating with the authorities of the town, he introduced workmen into the great church of St. Hippolyte, and commenced tearing down and building to transform the edifice into a Catholic church. This high-handed operation, begun without any show of authority, naturally provoked an indignant tumult. The magistrates of the town hastened to the church, and restrained the people from violence; then turning to Francis they reminded him, with dignity, that under the treaty of Nyon theirs was a free city, and that such proceedings as his could not be undertaken but with their consent. Not until the affair had reached this point, did Francis display his new orders from Turin to the eyes of the astounded and humiliated magistrates, with the threat that if they dared to interfere with them it would cost them the utter destruction of the town. It was, on the whole, not a pretty trick for an

* See the copy of the original memorandum in *Etudes biographiques sur St. François*, Chambéry, 1860. This work, although published anonymously, is valuable and accurate. There is also a scholar-like and conscientious thesis by Pastor Guillot of the Geneva Church, entitled *François de Sales et les Protestants*, Genève, 1878. The two chapters on Francis de Sales in M. Gaberel's *Histoire de l'Eglise de Genève*, vol. II, have been violently attacked in a pamphlet by the Abbé Fleury (*magni nominis umbra*), entitled *St. François de Sales, le F. Chérubin et les ministres de Genève*, Paris, 1864. The writer clearly convicts his antagonist of some loose quotations, but leaves him safe in his main positions. These various documents will guide the student to the original sources of information.

apostle to play ; but it was fairly successful. It failed, indeed, to provoke a riot ; but it succeeded in inflicting a public insult on the municipal authorities, and in "scattering terror" through the population. Francis wrote back to the duke with holy exultation : "The magistrates opposed me stoutly on the ground that it was a violation of the treaty of Nyon. I deny it ; but even if it were a violation of the treaty, I do not see that it is any of their business."

But of what use was a church without a congregation ? In order that the Christmas high mass should not be said to empty walls, President Favre went from village to village in the neighborhood "scattering terror" with one hand and seductive promises with the other. Under the assurance of being relieved from the crushing taxes, a number of the peasants were induced to attend the mass, and it was celebrated on Christmas day in the presence of these, and of the twelve Catholics of Thonon.*

From this time forth, Francis was aided by a great force of Capuchin friars and of secular priests, who were supported by the salaries that had been pledged by treaty to the exiled Protestant pastors. But our Apostle had lost faith in such means of evangelization, and looked for something more effective. Of any ordinary force there was no lack already in the garrisons of the Allinges and other military posts, which were under his orders, and which held the wretched country in complete subjection.† But there was need of something to "scatter terror ;" and our saint knew of just the instrument for the purpose, if only he could lay his hand upon it. The *Martinengo regiment* was a name that had only to be whispered in all that region to make the blood run cold with horror. It was a regiment of Spanish mercenaries that had been trained in the American wars to an exquisite delight and ingenuity in human torture. Seven years before, in the provinces neighboring the Chablais, it had been let loose like a ferocious beast by the Duke upon his own unarmed Protestant subjects, and day after day had revelled in ingenious torture, murder, and destruction. The simple *procès-verbal* containing the cata-

logue of these atrocities is one of the most awful pages in history. White-haired old men, the sick upon their beds, pregnant women, babies clinging to their mothers' breasts, were among the favorite objects of torture. To violate, to torture, to maim, to murder by slow degrees, were not enough ; the bodies of the murdered must be mutilated and obscenely exposed. The village patriarchs were hung in their own chimneys to be slowly suffocated by the smoke. Others were dragged at the heels of horses, or roasted in burning barns, from which they were taken out gasping and thrown to die on dunghills. Meeting a young lad, the ruffians dislocated all his fingers, then filled his mouth with gunpowder and blew his head off. One of their commonest ways of inflicting a death of lingering anguish was of a sort that history refuses to describe. But the following incident of that brave campaign, from the *procès-verbal*, suffices to give an idea of the style of warfare of the Martinengo regiment :

"The 13th of September, 1589, the Duke of Savoy having the day before entered the province of Gex, his troops, passing through Crozet, took the Reverend Girard Barbier, minister of the Word of God at the said Crozet, aged about seventy-five years, split up the soles of his feet, and set him astride an ass, his face towards the tail, and led him thus, with every kind of insult, and beating him incessantly, to the Castle of Gex, and presented him to the said Duke, in whose presence he declared that he had preached nothing but the pure truth, and in the same would persevere until the end. And being brought away again, and thrown upon a little heap of straw in front of his house, he there died, all his goods having been pillaged."*

Evidently the Martinengo regiment was exactly what Francis needed for his apostolic work. What he wanted was not soldiers, but those particular soldiers ; and we need not say that his application for the use of them was not made in vain to that religious prince whom they had entertained by their playful treatment of the aged pastor of Crozet. At the Apostle's request, this horde of devils were billeted on the towns and villages of the Chablais. "Great was the people's surprise," says good Marsollier, "when they beheld the arrival at Thonon, without previous notice, of the regiment of the Count of Martinengo, lieutenant-general of the Duke's armies, who took lodgings

* Gabeler, II, 604, on the authority of a manuscript of the Capuchin friars who aided Francis. The manuscript is curious and of unquestionable authenticity ; and I have taken pains to verify the citation. St. Genis (*Histoire de la Savoie*, II, 191) says that the mass was celebrated "before seven or eight old persons." This writer, showing no sympathy with the reformed religion, is nevertheless compelled to study the mission of Francis in its political and military aspects and comes to some very just conclusions.

† See Bull of Canonization, § 16.

* See the document in full in Gabeler, II, Appendix 235. It fills eight pages of small type with a mere catalogue of horrors.

in the town to await orders. The officers called in a body on Francis, and informed him that their orders were to do nothing except in co-operation with him."

From this point, the work of conversion was simple, straightforward, and rapid. The new missionaries showed great devotion to their work of confiscation and banishment. The earliest objects of their evangelical zeal were the three or four remaining pastors. Louis Viret, the infirm pastor of Thonon, took refuge across the lake, in the canton de Vaud. His colleague, Jean Clerc, was obliged to make his escape from the ruffians in haste with his seven little children, with no other provision than a piece of fifteen sous. Pastor Perraudet of Bons, quietly returning from a visit to a sick man, was overtaken by a trooper, who split his skull with a sabre.* Such acts as this last, it is to be hoped, were rare. Not many such could be necessary, and the saint disliked needless violence. All schoolmasters and other offensive characters were driven into exile.

Parallel with these persuasions were others of a kind more congenial to Francis' better nature. While obdurate Protestants were crushed with taxes, and saw their houses devoured, and their wives and daughters daily insulted by a billet of ruffianly troopers, the disinterested candor of those who showed themselves inclined to the new gospel was profusely rewarded by gifts, promotions, offices, festivities, and lavish hospitalities at the seats of the Catholic gentry. One noble house brought itself to the verge of ruin by its zealous liberality towards the new converts. A notable instance of the apostle's love to the household of faith was that of the minister Petit, made much of by all the saint's biographers as "a distinguished Protestant clergyman." The epithet does him less than justice. A dozen years before, he had been refused admission to the Geneva parishes for his infamous character. Only two years before, the pastors of Gex, believing him penitent, put him in charge of a village church; but at the end of a year he was deposed from the ministry, and afterwards lodged in gaol at Geneva, under accusation of various felonies, and narrowly escaped the gallows. In short, he was nearly as well known as Martinengo's troopers. Nothing was more natural than that he should have a sincere disgust for Protestantism; and Francis recognized without hesitation that he was just the man for his money, and had no scruple in writing to the Duke

that this man could be had for a consideration. "This incomparable prince" promptly responded with an order on the treasury.*

But our apostle's burning thirst for souls was not yet satisfied. He had the aid of the Capuchins, the dragoons, the nobility, and Petit; and legions of miraculous powers attended him. But nothing would content him but he must have the Duke in person. In the autumn of 1593 his repeated importunities were fulfilled. In company with the cardinal-legate, De Medicis, the Duke approached the town of Thonon with vindictive feelings known to all, and restrained only by the frail bridle of his solemn word and oath. The citizens and magistrates in terror entreated the intercession of Francis. It was a beautiful opportunity for the display of "his habitual sweetness." He put himself, with the old bishop, at the head of the Protestant magistracy and consistory, marched out to meet the Duke, and threw himself at his feet, refusing to rise until the forgiveness of the citizens was granted.† This *tableau* is said to have resulted in a number of important conversions. But touching as it was, it did not delay the saint in getting to business. Some new articles were all ready which he wished to have added to his program of conversion. "The heretic schoolmasters had been banished; now, let no child be sent abroad to school. Let heretics be expelled from all public offices, not only in his highness' immediate service, but in subordinate grades. Let Pastor Viret be kept as far as possible from Thonon. Let all Catholics dwelling in that town be admitted to the *bourgeoisie*. Finally, let all exercise of the Protestant religion be absolutely prohibited."‡ The Duke gave his consent, and under date of the 12th of October, patents were drawn by which judges, advocates, attorneys, notaries, castellans, and other such functionaries were dismissed; and all their acts, subsequent to that date, were declared null and void; in short, the guaranteed liberties of the Chablais were destroyed by the stroke of a pen.§ Ambassadors from Berne arrived soon after, with a protest against the perfidy; and the Duke submitted the matter to his Council, which advised him in favor of maintaining at least the show of good faith by tolerating the presence of three pastors in the province. But Francis warned the Duke under peril of everlasting damnation against any

* Gaberel, II, 612.

† Abbé de Baudry, *Relation abrégée des travaux de l'Apôtre du Chablais*, II.

‡ Gaberel, II, 625.

§ *Euvres de St. François*, XIV, 91.

* Guillot, page 34.

such weak concession,* and had his way about it.

The Duke was "amazed at the change that had passed over the people, and all the more so as no means had been used to bring them back to the Church but instruction and good example." Still, something remained to be done. How could this be, when the reported conversions already exceeded manifold the entire population of the country, is a materialist cavil easily disposed of in such an epoch of miracle. But for the hardened recusants who still held out against the sweetness of Francis, severer measures were now prepared.

One morning the gates of the town were occupied by soldiers of the Martinengo regiment. A double line of troops was posted in each of the principal streets, and the entire *bourgeoisie* of the town was summoned to present itself before the Duke in the great room of the Hôtel de Ville. With a shudder, the citizens observed that every exit from the room was guarded by these Spanish butchers,† and that at the right hand of the bloodthirsty Duke sat his inspiring genius in the person of the sweetly-smiling Francis de Sales. After a harangue addressed to the Protestants by a Capuchin friar, the Duke himself addressed them. He recalled the efforts that had been made for their conversion, not wholly without success. Those who had been converted would not fail of his royal favor. "But," said he, "there are those who are harder than the millstone; they love their wallowing in the mire; they prefer darkness to light. We detest them; and if they do not turn, they shall know what our disfavor means. Stand aside, wretched men! Let those that wear the Cross of Savoy in their hearts, and wish to be of the same religion with their prince, stand here at my right hand, and those who persist in their obduracy pass to my left!"

There was a moment of silence, a movement in the terrified crowd, and several went over and took their places at the right. But a large number still remained at the left. "Then the blessed Francis, leaving the Duke's side, came down among these, and exhorted them in the sweetest manner, saying: 'Are you not ashamed to act so? Have you no eyes nor senses? I warn you to look out for yourselves, for the Duke will show you no mercy.' Several were

brought over by *these sweet words*. Then the Duke, turning toward the obstinate, cried: 'Depart from me! You are not fit to live. In three days begone from my territories!' The soldiers at once did their duty, and these wretched people went into exile toward Nyon or Geneva. There were among them gentlemen of good estate, and many of less importance. Then his highness put his patents into execution. The mass was re-established in all the churches, the offices taken away from the heretics, their books burned, and every one who would not accept the Roman religion was driven from the country."*

The "*coup d'état* of Thonon" was repeated by the same actors in all the villages of the Chablais. A later edict allowed six months for remaining heretics to choose between conversion and exile; and with this we may say that "the Mission in the Chablais" was concluded. Of course for long years to come, the like measures had to be renewed in order to prevent and punish relapse. Caresses and corruption diminished, indeed, but cruelty did not cease, and of all the protracted series of confiscations, banishments, and harrings, this smiling and seraphic creature, over whose inconceivable meekness and gentleness such libations of gushing eulogy are poured out by the British press, was the instigator, the director, and sometimes in his own person the executioner.†

The work accomplished is variously estimated, according to the courage and imagination of the biographer. Loyau d'Amboise puts it at 20,000 converts. The Pope is very bold, and estimates Francis' total work of conversion at 70,000. Lady Herbert's discriminating pages give some elements for a conjecture, as by the 20,000 who shared in the adoration at the Duke's visit to Thonon, and the 162,000 communicants (it is well to be accurate) present at the Thonon Jubilee, "which put the finishing stroke to the work of conversion in the Chablais." The total population of this province, at the beginning of the mission,

* From the original *Life of St. Francis* by his nephew, quoted by M. Gaberel, II, 638. This work is the basis of all the subsequent biographies. The incautious naïveté of his statements is often modified by later authors, with a view to edification.

† On one occasion, some years after the *coup d'état*, two of the "converted" parishes were visited by ministers from Geneva. "Francis, indignant at this temerity, hastened to the fortress of Allinges for an armed force, since treaties and plighted word availed nothing." [He never appears to so much advantage as when he is vindicating the faith of treaties.] "He obtained a detachment of soldiers, and thought right (since it concerned the cause of God) to put himself at their head, and drove out by physical force those whom he had often convinced by spiritual weapons." The story is told by Fremin, a renegade Genevese, who became *curé* of Russin, in his *msa. History of Geneva*, in the Geneva Library, p. 510.

* *Life of Francis*, by Augustus, 179.

† The Abbé Marsollier chuckles with delight at the terror of the citizens who "believed that the Duke was about to proceed to the last extremities." *Vie de St. François*, liv. III.

carefully estimated from censuses taken before and after, was less than 4,000.*

One little incident closely connected with the conversion of the Chablais, is too characteristic to be omitted. There was living at the time, in Geneva, at the age of nearly eighty years, a most venerable man, the latest survivor of the company of the reformers, Theodore de Beza. The beauty and dignity of his old age charmed the great Casaubon, a few years later. "What a man he is!" he exclaims; "what piety! What learning! To hear him speak of sacred science, you could not believe him so extremely old. His whole life, his whole talk, is of God." He too, like Francis, was of noble birth, accomplished education, admirable gifts, beautiful courtesy of manner, and high devotion to religious duty. After a dissipated youth, he had received, with a penitence which all his after life attested, the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, to the unfolding of which his manhood was devoted. He left wealth and family behind him, gave up splendid benefices that were offered him in the Roman Church, and came to Geneva, where he became to Calvin what Melancthon was to Luther. His whole life had been spent in stormy conflicts, but its eventide was full of peace and honors. By personal character, as well as by his position as presiding pastor of the Geneva Church, he was the foremost man of the reformed communion.

To Theodore de Beza, Francis de Sales was sent, during the unhelpful earlier months of his Chablais mission, with a commission from the Pope to labor for his conversion. Seeking private interviews with the venerable pastor, the enterprising young theologian plied him with arguments which (it is needless to say) were of small effect on the veteran colloquist of Poissy. Francis reported his ill-success to the Pope, and asked for further instructions. The instructions came; and this young gentleman was not ashamed to go back to the poor study in which the old man toiled at his daily work, with the offer, in the name of the Pope, of an annual pension of 4,000 gold crowns, and a gift of twice the value of all his personal property, as the price of his apostasy. It is Francis himself that tells the shameful story, and adds that, seeing that he was accomplishing nothing, he withdrew and returned to Thonon. A contemporary manuscript, preserved at Geneva, adds that, at these insulting words, old

Beza's gentle expression changed to sternness. He pointed to his empty bookshelves, whose precious contents had been sold to provide for the suffering refugees from France, and, opening the door for his guest, let him go with a *vade retro, Sathanas*.*

To get possession of Geneva, and to be enthroned there, not only as bishop, but as secular prince, was one of Francis' earliest and latest dreams.† To what lengths of wrong-doing he was impelled by it, will not be known until the secrets of all hearts are revealed. He is known to us almost exclusively by the mendacious panegyrics of his friends, and by his own copious but not, ordinarily, incautious correspondence. Neither in these nor in other documents do we find anything to convict him of actual conscious complicity with the atrocious crime of the Escalade of 1602. What might have been if the perfidious projects which the Duke was continually nursing in his revengeful bosom had been rebuked instead of encouraged by his favorite clergyman, we can only guess. Perhaps it would have made no difference in the course of that wretched prince whom our saint publicly extols for his piety and for all the Christian virtues, but whom, in a private conversation with Mother Angélique,‡ he denounces in a whisper for his "dirty tricks," as "clever in men's eyes but in the eyes of God a reprobate." Perhaps it might not have changed the Duke's course; but it would have been better for the memory of the saint.

* Nevertheless, the story that Beza was actually convinced and converted was studiously circulated at the time, and is repeated to this day in the Lives of Francis. On the grave authority of an after-dinner story told by a pot-companion of that chaste monarch, Henry IV., it is alleged that the cause which held this blameless old man to his principles was licentiousness! One may find the charge and the story gracefully reproduced by Lady Herbert, p. 97. The facts of the case, as any well-informed person might see, make the charge simply absurd. But it would be unjust to hold her ladyship to a rigid moral responsibility for lack of information. Beza was never under a vow of celibacy, so that there was not that to bind him even to the measure of self-denial exacted of the French ecclesiastic of the period. According to this story, he took refuge, for his vices, in the one corner of the earth where they were sure to be austere and rigorously punished; and refused wealth and asylum in Italy where the state of society and law on this point was — what it was. It is interesting to read the Bull in which the Pope and two score Italian prelates put their virtuous hands to this disgraceful libel.

† Francis clung fast to the title of prince as well as bishop, to the day of his death; and his will, the autograph of which is shown, with other relics, at the family seat at Thôrens, gives instructions for his burial in his own cathedral at Geneva, in case the town should be recovered to the Catholic religion after his death.

‡ Sainte Beuve (*Port Royal*, I, 257) quotes this discrepancy with admiration in proof of Francis' practical shrewdness and *finesse*. If it is right to speak of a saint as taking pride in anything, Francis was proud of his bluff, outspoken sincerity, "à l'ancienne gauloise." — "Je ne sais nullement l'art de mentir, ni de dissimuler, ni de feindre avec dextérité.... Ce que j'ai sur les lèvres, c'est justement ce qui sort de ma pensée.... je hais la duplicité comme la mort." Marsollier, liv. VIII, § 18.

* The estimate is made by comparing the census of 1558 with that of 1694, Gaberel, II, 588. The splendid figure of 162,000 is inclusive of pilgrims who were present in large numbers.

The history of this prince's reign is stained on every page with plots to seize Geneva by perfidy, by purchased treachery, by ambuscade, by secret attack in times of plighted peace, under cover of assurances of his friendship; so that it was not with guileless unsuspectance as to what might be the bearing of the question, that Francis once answered his sovereign's inquiry: "What should be done with Geneva?"—"There is no doubt that heresy would be weakened throughout Europe if this town, the very seat of Satan, could be reduced and subjugated." And he went on to indicate at length the things that made this little town of 15,000 souls the metropolis and radiating center of the reformed faith. Then, proposing certain spiritual methods, he added: "I know these remedies are small and slow, but is there anything else that could be done in this unhappy and degenerate age?" And then, in response to a word of encouragement from the Duke, he added slyly: "As to the *destruction* of the town, that is not exactly in my line nor to my taste. Your Highness has more expedients for that than I could dream of.* He conceals many things, but does not hide his feelings towards the city,—his city, as he calls it—"that den of thieves and outlaws." He writes to the Pope: "This town is to heretics and devils what Rome is to angels and Catholics. Every good Catholic, but most of all the Pope and the Catholic princes, ought to do his best to have this Babylon demolished or converted."

Simultaneously with the preparations for the consecration of Francis as Bishop and Prince of Geneva, the Duke, stimulated by such talk as this from his spiritual adviser, carried on his secret preparations for that Escalade which, had it succeeded, would have anticipated, in the course of history, the horrors of the sack of Magdeburg by those of the sack of Geneva. It was plotted for the darkest night in the year, the 12th of December, o. s., 1602. About the end of November, Francis, returning thanks to the Chapter of his cathedral for their congratulations on his appointment, bade them: "Good-bye for the present, *expecting soon to meet you again in your own city.*"† Thence he went into retreat to prepare for the solemnities of his consecration. His confessor, on this occasion, was that noted Scottish Jesuit, Father Alexander, who stood a few nights later at the foot of the scaling-ladders and shrived the ruffians, one

by one, as they crept up the wall of Geneva to their work of midnight assassination.* How the cruel and perfidious plot was foiled, and how the Duke slunk back to Turin foaming with disappointed rage, is it not told with glee in every Genevese family the world over, as often as the 12th of December comes round? One of the exasperating sights that met the Duke's eye as he rode homeward through Annecy, was the long train of sumpter-mules sent by his orders from Turin, laden with church decorations and altar furniture and with eighty hundredweight of wax candles, to be used in the decoration and illumination of St. Peter's at Geneva, when its prince-bishop should celebrate mass at Christmas in his own cathedral church.

It is possible that for fear of displeasing the saint's "sweetness," these preparations had all been concealed from his too sensitive mind; that he had no conjecture about the mysterious movement of troops through his diocese; that his remark to his canons had no reference to anything in particular; and that the new bishop, looking out of his window at Annecy at the train from Turin, wondered in his heart where in the world all that church gear could be going to. We should wrong his blessed memory if we were to say that his guilt was demonstrated. But many a wretch has justly been hanged on less evidence of complicity in less atrocious crime.

It is not needful to pursue further the course of the life of Francis de Sales. The traits manifest in his earlier life (though veiled in most of his recent biographies) are to be recognized in all his subsequent career.† It would be easy, if only the torrent of fulsome panegyric would assuage long enough to give the opportunity, to present his character in more pleasing aspects. There were noble and beautiful things in Francis. But one tires of seeing this adroit and courtier-like fanatic, with his duplicity and his cold-blooded cruelty, recommended in standing advertisements to the abused public as "a model of Christian saintliness and religious virtue for all time," as having lived "a life as sweet, pure, and noble as any man by divine help has been permitted

* This fact has recently been developed by Mr. Th. Claparède in a paper read before the Archæological Society of Geneva.

† His labors in the Pays de Gex were quite of the same character with those in the Chablais, except that, instructed by his two years' experiment in the Chablais, he scattered no more of his rhetorical pearls before swine, but began at once with force. See Claparède, *Histoire des Eglises réformées du Pays de Gex*: Brossard, *Histoire politique et religieuse du Pays de Gex*: Bourg-en-Bresse, 1851; Guillot, *Fr. de Sales et les Protestants*: Genève, 1871. The legendary story of the mission in Gex may be read in any of the Lives of Francis.

* *Deuxième discours au Duc de Savoie.* (Œuvres, XIV. 76.)

† Letter 42.

to live upon earth ;" and as having been "admirable for his freedom from bigotry in an age of persecution." Neither can we enter fully into sympathy with those to whom "it is a matter of entire thankfulness to find a distinctively Anglican writer setting forward" the ferocious and perfidious dragonnades by which he extinguished Christian light and liberty in the provinces south of Lake Lemman, and smote that lovely region with a blight that lingers on it visibly until this day, "as a true missionary task to reclaim souls from deadly error, and bring them back to the truth."* That writer would render a good service, not only to history, but to practical religion, who should give the world a true picture of Francis de Sales, with all his singular graces and with his crying faults; and so supersede the myriads of impossible fancy-portraits with nimbus and wings, with eyes rolling in mystical rapture, and with the everlasting smirk of "sweetness" and gentleness.

MONASTICISM: ITS IDEALS AND ITS HISTORY.

III.

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THE first new step in the development of monasticism was taken in Italy in the sixth century. It was St. Benedict of Nursia who formulated the new monastic rule and prepared monasticism for subordinated activity and profitable labor. It had first to be reorganized before it could play an active part. To be sure, Benedict's monastic rule was by no means new, so far as its contents were concerned. At the beginning of the sixth century the forms of "monasticism" in the West were exceedingly various, and, in part, very open to suspicion. The service rendered by Benedict consisted in the *reduction* of these forms to the one most suitable, and the success which he scored was only exceeded by the service which he rendered. The following items are especially noteworthy: the strict obedience to which the monks were obligated, the orderly association, the opposition to wandering and idle monks, the exact regulation of daily life and the stern duty of labor, primarily that of agriculture. Demands touching obedience and

labor are met, indeed, in the rules of the Orient, and, while in the new arrangement they did not immediately occupy first place, in subsequent times they grew to be more important than all the others. And what changes they produced! Out of monkish colonies that were rough and in part scattered and confused, there grew up orderly alliances possessed of a power for work which was compelled to seek a field for its activity. That great bishop in the chair of Peter, Gregory I., who was himself heart and soul a monk, took this new power into his service and used it for the church. It may be mentioned that the Ostrogothic minister, Cassiodorus, had previously introduced scientific occupations into the monastic scheme and himself had begun to compose theological and historical manuals for use in the monasteries, to one of which he had retired when weary of long life. After the seventh century we meet members of the order of St. Benedict widely scattered in the West. They made woodlands arable, they turned waste places into fruitful fields, with good or bad conscience they studied the songs of heathen poets and the writings of historians and philosophers. Monasteries and monastery schools blossomed forth and each settlement became a centre of religious life as well as of education. With the assistance of these bands the Roman bishop was able to propagate or to preserve Christianity and a part of the ancient culture in the West; by their aid he made the new German states Romano-German. The Roman bishop did this—for neither did Benedict contemplate such an occupation for the order, nor did it proceed spontaneously from his rule, nor was it consciously proposed by his disciples as a task. Rather, at this initial stage we see monasticism entirely in the service and under the direction of the great Roman bishops and Roman legates, such as St. Boniface. It was only on account of its subjection to the church-idea which proceeded from Rome, that the order succeeded (the most important event of the period) in Romanizing the Frankish church, which, from the beginning had been allied with the state, and in suppressing all those monasteries that were not governed by the rule of Benedict. "The impartation and the free influence of its spiritual possession lay outside of the purpose of the order, although many of the brothers were active in missionary labors with eminent success, although many others were disseminating learning outside of the monasteries, and although some had

* The quotations are from "Opinions of the Press," in Messrs. Rivingtons' Catalogue.