HISTORY

OF THE

WALDENSES

BY THE

Rev. J. A. WYLIE, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE PAPACY," "DAYBREAK IN SPAIN," ETC.

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PREFACE.

This work — which is a reprint of the Sixteenth Book of   
the History of Protestantism — is exclusively occupied   
with the subject of the Waldenses. It describes suc-   
cinctly the conflicts they waged and the martyrdoms   
they endured in defence of their faith and their liberty,   
and is published in the present form to meet the re-   
quirements of those who take a special interest in this   
remarkable people.

Recent events in Europe have brought the Waldenses   
into prominence, and thrown a new light upon the gran-   
deur of their struggle and the important and enduring   
issues which have flowed from it. To them, in a very   
particular manner, are we to trace the constitutional   
liberties which Italy at this hour enjoys. In the event-   
ful year of 1848, when a new constitution was being   
framed for Piedmont, the Waldenses made it plain   
to the Government that there would not be standing-   
room for them within the lines of that constitution, unless   
it embraced the great principle of freedom of conscience.   
For that principle they had contended during five   
hundred years, and nothing short of it could they   
accept as a basis of national settlement, persuaded   
that any other guarantee of their liberties would be   
illusory. Their demand was conceded: the principle

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of freedom of conscience — the root of all liberty —   
was embodied in the new constitution, and thus the   
whole inhabitants of Piedmont shared equally with   
the "Waldenses in a boon which the straggles of the   
latter had been mainly instrumental in securing.   
 Not only so: in process of time the constitution of   
Piedmont was extended to the rest of Italy, and the   
whole Italian nation is at this hour sharing in the   
fruits which have sprung from the toil and the blood,   
the unswerving faith, and the heroic devotion of the   
Waldenses. Nor is their work finished even yet. They   
have understood the end for which they have been   
preserved through so many ages of darkness and con-   
flict, and have energetically thrown themselves into the   
evangelisation of modern Italy, and doubtless these   
ancient confessors are destined to win, in the land   
where they endured so many dark sorrows, not a few   
brilliant triumphs, and by the labours of the present   
to add to the obligations which Christendom owes them   
for the services of the past.

J. A. Wylie.

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It was the ninth century, and superstitious beliefs   
and idolatrous rites were overspreading the Church,   
when Claudius, Bishop of Turin, who was deeply imbued   
with the spirit of Augustine, set himself to arrest the   
growing corruption with all the fervour of a living   
faith, and the vigour of a courageous and powerful   
intellect. To the battle for the purity of doctrine he   
joined that for the independence of the Churches of   
Lombardy. Even in Claude's day they remained free,   
although many Churches more remote from Rome had   
already been subjugated by that all-conquering power.   
The Ambrosian Liturgy was still used in the cathedral   
of Milan, and the Augustinian doctrine continued to   
be preached from many of the pulpits of Lombardy   
and Piedmont. This independence of Rome, and this   
greater purity of faith and worship, these Churches   
mainly owed to the three Apostolic men whose names   
adorn their annals — Ambrose, Vigilantius, and Claude.   
 When Claude went to his grave, about the year 840,   
the battle, although not altogether dropped, was but   
languidly maintained. Attempts were renewed to   
induce the Bishops of Milan to accept the epis-   
copal pall, the badge of spiritual vassalage, from   
the Pope; but it was not till the middle of the

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eleventh century (1059), under Nicholas II., that these   
attempts were successful. Petrus Damianus, Bishop   
of Ostia, and Anselm, Bishop of Lucca, were dis-   
patched by the Pontiff to receive the submission of   
the Lombard Churches, and the popular tumults amid   
which that submission was extorted sufficiently show   
that the spirit of Claude still lingered at the foot of   
the Alps. Nor did the clergy conceal the regret   
with which they surrendered their ancient liberties   
to a power before which the whole earth was   
then bowing down; for the Papal legate, Damianus,   
informs us that the clergy of Milan maintained in   
his presence that " The Ambrosian Church, according   
to the ancient institutions of the Fathers, was always   
free, without being subject to the laws of Rome, and   
that the Pope of Rome had no jurisdiction over their   
Church as to the government or constitution of it." \*   
 But if the plains were conquered, not so the moun-   
tains. A considerable body of Protesters stood out   
against this deed of submission. Of these some crossed   
the Alps, descended the Rhine, and raised the standard   
of opposition in the diocese of Cologne, where they   
were branded as Manicheans, and rewarded with the   
stake. Others retired into the valleys of the Pied-   
montese Alps, and there maintained their scriptural   
faith and their ancient independence. What has just   
been related respecting the dioceses of Milan and   
Turin settles the question of the apostolicity of the   
Churches of the Waldensian valleys. It is not necessary   
to show that missionaries were sent from Rome in the   
first age to plant Christianity in these valleys, nor is   
it necessary to show that these Churches have existed   
as distinct and separate communities from early days;   
enough that they formed a part, as unquestionably they   
did, of the great evangelical Church of the North of

\* Petrus Damianus, *Opusc*, p. 5. Allix, Churches of Piedmont,   
 p. 113. M'Crie, *Hist, of Reform, in Italy*, p. 2.

THE "NOBLA LEYÇON.” 3

Italy. This is the proof at once of their apostolicity   
and their independence. It attests their descent from   
apostolic men, if doctrine be the life of Churches.   
When their co-religionists on the plains entered within   
the pale of the Roman jurisdiction, they retired within   
the mountains, and, spurning alike the tyrannical yoke   
and the corrupt tenets of the Church of the Seven   
Hills, they preserved in its purity and simplicity the   
faith their fathers had handed down to them. Rome   
manifestly was the schismatic, she it was that had   
abandoned what was once the common faith of Christen-   
dom, leaving by that step to all who remained on the   
old ground the indisputably valid title of the True   
Church.   
 Behind this rampart of mountains, which Providence,   
foreseeing the approach of evil days, would almost   
seem to have reared on purpose, did the remnant of   
the early apostolic Church of Italy kindle their lamp,   
and here did that lamp continue to burn all through   
the long night which descended on Christendom. There   
is a singular concurrence of evidence in favour of their   
high antiquity. Their traditions invariably point to   
an unbroken descent from the earliest times, as re-   
gards their religious belief. The Nobla Leyçon, which   
dates from the year 1100,\* goes to prove that the   
Waldenses of Piedmont did not owe their rise to Peter   
Waldo of Lyons, who did not appear till the latter,   
half of that century (1160). The Nobla Leyçon though f   
a poem, is in reality a confession of faith, and could   
have been composed only after some considerable study   
of the system of Christianity, in contradistinction   
to the errors of Rome. How could a Church have   
arisen with such a document in her hands? Or how   
could these herdsmen and vine-dressers, shut up in   
their mountains, have detected the errors against which   
  
 \* Recent German criticism refers the Nobla Leyçon to a later   
date, but still one anterior to the Reformation.

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they bore testimony, and found their way to the truths   
of which they made open profession in times of darkness   
like these? If we grant that their religious beliefs   
were the heritage of former ages, handed down from   
an evangelical ancestry, all is plain; but if we maintain   
that they were the discovery of the men of those days,   
we assert what approaches almost to a miracle. Their   
greatest enemies, Claude Seyssel of Turin (1517),   
and Reynerius the Inquisitor (1250), have admitted   
their antiquity, and stigmatised them as "the most   
dangerous of all heretics, because the most ancient."   
 Rorenco, Prior of St. Roch, Turin (1640), was   
employed to investigate the origin and antiquity of   
the Waldenscs, and of course had access to all the   
Waldensian documents in the ducal archives, and being   
their bitter enemy he may be presumed to have made   
his report not more favourable than he could help.   
Yet he states that "they were not a new sect in   
the ninth and tenth centuries, and that Claude of Turin   
must have detached them from the Church in the   
ninth century.'"   
 Within the limits of her own land did God pro-   
vide a dwelling for this venerable Church. Let us   
bestow a glance upon the region. As one comes from   
the south, across the level plain of Piedmont, while yet   
nearly a hundred miles off, one sees the Alps rise before   
one, stretching like a great wall along the horizon.   
From the gates of the morning to those of the setting   
sun, the mountains run on in a line of towering magni-   
ficence. Pasturages and chestnut-forests clothe their base;   
eternal snows crown their summits. How varied are   
their forms! Some rise like castles of stupendous strength;   
others shoot up tall and tapering like needles; while   
others again run along in serrated lines, their summits   
torn and cleft by the storms of many thousand winters.   
At the hour of sunrise, what a glory kindles along the   
crest of that snowy rampart! At sunset the spectacle is   
  
 MONTE CASTELLUZZO. 5

again renewed, and a line of pyres is seen to burn in the   
evening sky.   
 Drawing nearer the hills, on a line about thirty   
miles west of Turin, there opens before one what   
seems a great mountain portal. This is the entrance   
to the Waldensian territory. A low hill drawn along   
in front serves as a defence against all who may come   
with hostile intent, as but too frequently happened in   
times gone by, while a stupendous monolith — the   
Castelluzzo — shoots up to the clouds, and stands sentinel   
at the gate of this renowned region. As one approaches   
La Torre the Castelluzzo rises higher and higher, and   
irresistibly fixes the eye by the perfect beauty of its   
pillar-like form.\* But to this mountain a higher interest   
belongs than any that mere symmetry can give it. It   
is indissolubly linked with martyr-memories, and borrows   
a halo from the achievements of the past. How often,   
in days of old, was the confessor hurled sheer down its   
awful steep, and dashed on the rocks at its foot I And   
there, commingled in one ghastly heap, growing ever   
the bigger and ghastlier as another and yet another   
victim was added to it, lay the mangled bodies of pastor   
and peasant, of mother and child! It was the tragedies   
connected with this mountain mainly that called forth   
Milton's noble sonnet: —   
 "Avenge, Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones   
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.   
 \* \* \* in Thy book record their groanB   
 Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,   
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled   
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans   
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they   
 To heaven."   
 The Waldensian valleys are seven in number; they   
were more in ancient times, but the limits of the   
Vaudois territory have undergone repeated curtail-   
\* The new and elegant temple of the Waldensea now rises near   
the foot of the Castelluzzo.

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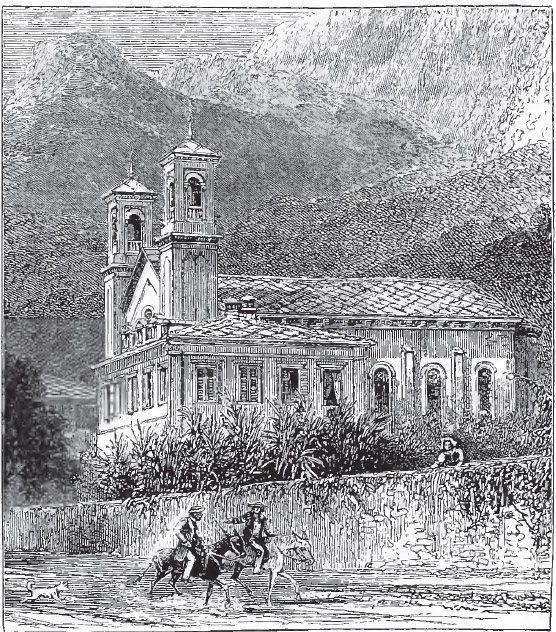
ment, and now only seven remain, lying between   
Pinerolo on the east and Monte Viso on the west —   
that pyramidal hill which forms so prominent an ob-   
ject from every part of the plain of Piedmont, tower-   
ing as it does above the surrounding mountains, and,   
like a horn of silver, cutting the ebon of the firmament.   
 The first three valleys run out somewhat like the   
spokes of a wheel, the spot on which we stand — the   
gateway, namely — being the nave. The first is *Luserna*,   
or Valley of Light. It runs right out in a grand gorge   
of some twelve miles in length by about two in width.   
It wears a carpeting of meadows, which the waters of   
the Pelice keep ever fresh and bright. A profusion of   
vines, acacias, and mulberry-trees, fleck it with their   
shadows; and a wall of lofty mountains encloses it on   
either hand. The second is *Rora*, or Valley of Dews.   
It is a vast cup, some fifty miles in circumference, its   
sides luxuriantly clothed with meadow and corn-field,   
with fruit and forest trees, and its rim formed of craggy   
and peaked mountains, many of them snow-clad. The   
third is Angrogna, or Valley of Groans. Of it we shall   
speak more particularly afterwards. Beyond the ex-   
tremity of the first three valleys are the remaining four,   
forming, as it were, the rim of the wheel. These   
last are enclosed in their turn by a line of lofty   
mountains, which form a wall of defence around the   
entire territory. Each valley is a fortress having its   
own gate of ingress and egress, with its caves, and   
rocks, and mighty chestnut-trees, forming places of   
retreat and shelter, so that the highest engineering skill   
could not have better adapted each several valley to this   
very purpose. It is not less remarkable that, taking all   
these valleys together, each is so related to each, the one   
opening into the other, that they may be said to form   
one fortress of amazing and matchless strength — wholly   
impregnable, in fact. All the fortresses of Europe,   
though combined, would not form a citadel so enor-

THE WALDENSIAN VALLEYS. 7

mously strong, and so dazzlingly magnificent, as the   
mountain dwelling of the Vaudois. "The Eternal, our   
God," says Leger, "having destined this land to be the   
theatre of his marvels, and the bulwark of his ark, has,   
by natural means, most marvellously fortified it." The   
battle begun in one valley could be continued in another,   
and carried round the entire territory, till at last the   
invading foe, overpowered by the rocks rolled upon him   
from the mountains, or assailed by enemies which would   
start suddenly out of the mist or issue from some   
unsuspected cave, found retreat impossible, and, cut off   
in detail, left his bones to whiten the mountains he had   
come to subdue.   
 These valleys are lovely and fertile, as well as   
strong. They are watered by numerous torrents, which   
descend from the snows of the summits. The grassy   
carpet of their bottom; the mantling vine and the   
golden grain of their lower slopes; the chalets that   
dot their sides, sweetly embowered amid fruit-trees;   
and, higher up, the great chestnut-forests and the pasture-   
lands, where the herdsmen keep watch over their flocks   
all through the summer days and the starlit nights:   
the nodding crags, from which the torrent leaps into   
the light; the rivulet, singing with quiet gladness in   
the shady nook; the mists, moving grandly among the   
mountains, now veiling, now revealing, their majesty;   
and the far-off summits, tipped with silver, to be   
changed at eve into gleaming gold — make up a picture   
of blended beauty and grandeur, not equalled, perhaps, and   
certainly not surpassed, in any other region of the earth.   
 In the heart of their mountains is situated the most   
interesting, perhaps, of all their valleys. It was in this   
retreat, walled round by "hills whose heads touch   
heaven," that their barbes or pastors, from all their   
several parishes, were wont to meet in annual synod.   
It was here that their college stood, and it was here   
that their missionaries were trained, and, after ordina-

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tion, were sent forth to sow the good seed, as op-   
portunity offered, in other lands. Let us visit this



MONTE CASTELLUZZO AND THE WALDENSIAN TEMPLE.

valley. We ascend to it by the long, narrow, and wind-   
ing AnTogna. Bright meadows enliven its entrance.   
The mountains on either hand are clothed with the vine,

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF ITALY. 9

the mulberry, and the chestnut. Anon the valley   
contracts. It becomes rough with projecting rocks,

and shady with great trees. A few paces farther, and it

expands into a circular basin, feathery with birches,

musical with falling waters, environed atop by naked

crags, fringed with dark pines, while the white peak

looks down out of heaven. A little in advance the

valley seems shut in by a mountainous wall, drawn

right across it; and beyond, towering sublimely upward,

is seen an assemblage of snow-clad Alps, amid which

is placed the valley we are in quest of, where burned

of old the candle of the Waldenses. Some terrible   
convulsion has rent this mountain from top to bottom,

opening a path through it to the valley beyond. We

enter the dark chasm, and proceed along on a narrow

ledge in the mountain's side, hung half-way between

the torrent, which is heard thundering in the abyss

below, and the summits which lean over us above.

Journeying thus for about two miles, we find the pass

beginning to widen, the light to break in, and now we

arrive at the gate of the Pra.

There opens before us a noble circular valley, its

grassy bottom watered by torrents, its sides dotted with

dwellings and clothed with corn-fields and pasturages,

with a ring of white peaks encircling it above. This

was the inner sanctuary of the Waldensian temple.

The rest of Italy had turned aside to idols, the Waldensian

territory alone had been reserved for the worship of

the true God. And was it not meet that on its

native soil a remnant of the Apostolic Church of Italy

should be maintained, that Rome and all Christendom

might have before their eyes a perpetual monument

of what they themselves had once been, and a living

witness to testify how far they had departed from their

first faith? \*

\* This short description of the "Waldensian valleys is drawn

from the author's personal observations.

CHAPTER II.

THE WALDENSES THEIR MISSIONS AND MABTYKDOMS.

Their Synod and College— Their Theological Tenets— Romaunt Version   
of the New Testament— The Constitution of their Church— Their   
Missionary Labours — Wide Diffusion of their Tenets — The Stone   
Smiting the Image.

One would like to have a near view of the barbes or   
pastors, who presided over the school of early Protestant   
theology that existed in the valleys, and to know how it   
fared with evangelical Christianity in the ages that pre-   
ceded the Reformation. But the time is remote, and the   
events are dim. We can but doubtfully glean from   
a variety of sources the facts necessary to form a picture   
of this venerable Church, and even then the picture   
is not complete. The theology of which this was one   
of the fountain-heads was not the clear, well-defined,   
and comprehensive system which the sixteenth century   
gave us; it was only what the faithful men of the   
Lombard Churches had been able to save from the wreck   
of primitive Christianity. True religion, being a revela-   
tion, was from the beginning complete and perfect;   
nevertheless, in this as in every other branch of know-   
ledge, it is only by patient labour that man is able   
to extricate and arrange all its parts, and to come into   
the full possession of truth. The theology taught in   
former ages in the peak-environed valley in which   
we have in imagination placed ourselves was drawn   
from the Bible. The atoning death and justifying   
righteousness of Christ was its cardinal truth. This,   
the Nobla Leyçon and other ancient documents abundantly   
  
  
 WALDENSIAN "HERESIES." 11

testify. The Nobla Leyçon sets forth with tolerable   
clearness the doctrine of the Trinity, the fall of man,   
the incarnation of the Son, the perpetual authority   
of the Decalogue as given by God,\* the need of   
Divine grace in order to good works, the necessity of   
holiness, the institution of the ministry, the resurrection   
of the body, and the eternal bliss of heaven.§ This   
creed its professors exemplified in lives of evangelical   
virtue. The blamelessness of the Waldenses passed into   
a proverb, so that one more than ordinarily exempt from   
the vices of his time was sure to be suspected of being a   
Vaudes.₸  
 If doubt there were regarding the tenets of the   
Waldenses, the charges which their enemies have pre-   
ferred against them would set that doubt at rest, and   
make it tolerably certain that they held substantially   
what the apostles before their day, and the Reformers   
after it, taught. The indictment against the Waldenses   
included a formidable list of "heresies." They held   
that there had been no true Pope since the days of   
Sylvester; that temporal offices and dignities were   
not meet for preachers of the Gospel; that the Pope's   
pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that   
relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to   
one knew not whom; that to go on pilgrimage served   
no end, save to empty one's purse; that flesh might be   
eaten any day if one's appetite served him; that holy   
water was not a whit more efficacious than rain-water;   
  
\* This disproves the charge of Manioheism brought against them   
by their enemies.   
§ Sir Samuel Morland gives the Nobla Zeycon in full in his   
History of the Churches of the Waldenses. Allix (chap. 18) gives   
a summary of it.   
₸ The Nobla Leyçon has the following passage: — " If there be   
an honest man, "who desires to love God and fear Jesus Christ,   
who will neither slander, nor swear, nor lie, nor commit adultery, nor   
kill, nor steal, nor avenge himself of his enemies, they presently   
say of such a one he is a Vaudes, and worthy of death."

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and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if   
offered in a church. They were accused, moreover, of   
having scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation, and   
of having spoken blasphemously of Rome as the harlot   
of the Apocalypse.\*   
 There is reason to believe, from recent historical   
researches, that the Waldenses possessed the New Testa-   
ment in the vernacular. The "Lingua Romana," or   
Romaunt tongue, was the common language of the south   
of Europe from the eighth to the fourteenth century.   
It was the language of the troubadours and of men   
of letters in the Dark Ages. Into this tongue — the   
Romaunt — was the first translation of the whole of the   
New Testament made so early as the twelfth century.   
This fact Dr. Gilly has been at great pains to prove in   
his work, *The Romaunt Version§ of the Gospel accord-   
ing to John*. The sum of what Dr. Gilly, by a patient   
investigation into facts, and a great array of historic   
documents, maintains, is that all the books of the New   
Testament were translated from the Latin Vulgate into   
the Romaunt, that this was the first literal version since   
the fall of the empire, that it [was made in the twelfth   
century, and was the first translation available for   
popular use. There were numerous earlier translations,   
but only of parts of the Word of God, and many of   
these were rather paraphrases or digests of Scripture than   
translations, and, moreover, they were so bulky, and by   
consequence so costly, as to be utterly beyond the reach   
of the common people. This Romaunt version was the   
first complete and literal translation of the New Testa-   
ment of Holy Scripture; it was made, as Dr. Gilly, by   
  
\* See a list of numerous heresies and blasphemies charged upon   
the Waldenses by the Inquisitor Reynerius, who wrote about the year   
1250, and extracted by Allix (chap. 22).   
§ The Romaunt Version of the Gospel according to John, from MS.   
preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Bibliothhque du Iioi,   
Paris. By William Stephen Gilly, D.D., Canon of Durham, and   
Vicar of Norham. Loud., 1848.

THE ROMAUNT NEW TESTAMENT. 13

a chain of proofs, shows, most probably under the super-   
intendence and at the expense of Peter Waldo of Lyons,   
not later than 1180, and so is older than any complete   
version in German, French, Italian, Spanish, or English.   
This version was widely spread in the south of France,   
and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use   
among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small   
part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these   
mountaineers to preserve and circulate it. Of the   
Romaunt New Testament six copies have come down to   
our day. A copy is preserved at each of the four fol-   
lowing places: Lyons, Grenoble, Zurich, Dublin ; and   
two copies at Paris. These are small, plain, and por-   
table volumes, contrasting with those splendid and pon-   
derous folios of the Latin Vulgate, penned in characters   
of gold and silver, richly illuminated, their bindings   
decorated with gems, inviting admiration rather than   
study, and unfitted by their size and splendour for the   
use of the people.   
 The Church of the Alps, in the simplicity of its   
constitution, may be held to have been a reflection of   
the Church of the first centuries. The entire terri-   
tory included in the Waldensian limits was divided   
into parishes. In each parish was placed a pastor,   
who led his flock to the living waters of the Word   
of God. He preached, he dispensed the Sacraments,   
he visited the sick, and catechised the young. With   
him was associated in the government of his congre-   
gation a consistoiy of laymen. The synod met once   
a year. It was composed of all the pastors, with an   
equal number of laymen, and its most frequent place   
of meeting was the secluded mountain-engirdled valley   
at the head of Angrogna. Sometimes as many as a   
hundred and fifty barbes, with the same number of   
lay members, would assemble. We can imagine them   
seated — it may be on the grassy slopes of the valley   
— a venerable company of humble, learned, earnest

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men, presided over by a simple moderator (for higher   
office or authority was unknown, amongst them), and   
suspending their deliberations respecting the affairs   
of their Churches, and the condition of their flocks,   
only to offer their prayers and praises to the Eternal,   
while the majestic snow-clad peaks looked down upon   
them from the silent firmament. There needed, verily,   
no magnificent fane, no blazonry of mystic rites to   
make their assembly august.   
 The youth who here sat at the feet of the more   
venerable and learned of their barbes used as their   
text-book the Holy Scriptures. And not only did   
they study the sacred volume; they were required to   
commit to memory, and be able accurately to recite,   
whole Gospels and Epistles. This was a necessary   
accomplishment on the part of public instructors in   
those ages when printing was unknown, and copies   
of the Word of God were rare. Part of their time   
was occupied in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or   
portions of them, which they were to distribute when   
they went forth as missionaries. By this, and by other   
agencies, the seed of the Divine Word was scattered   
throughout Europe more widely than is commonly   
supposed. To this a variety of causes contributed.   
There was then a general impression that the world   
was soon to end. Men thought that they saw the   
prognostications of its dissolution in the disorder into   
which all things had fallen. The pride, luxury, and   
profligacy of the clergy, led not a few laymen to ask   
if better and more certain guides were not to be had.   
Many of the troubadours were religious men, whose   
lays were sermons. The hour of deep and universal   
slumber had passed; the serf was contending with his   
seigneur for personal freedom, and the city was waging   
war with the baronial castle for civic and corporate   
independence. The New Testament — and, as we learn   
from incidental notices, portions of the Old — coming   
  
  
 WALDENSIAN MISSIONARIES. 15

at this juncture in a language understood alike in   
the court as in the camp, in the city as in the rural   
hamlet, was welcome to many, and its truths obtained   
a wider promulgation than perhaps had taken place   
since the publication of the Vulgate by Jerome.   
 After passing a certain time in the school of the   
barbes, it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth   
to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of   
Lombardy, or to the Sorbonne at Paris. There they   
saw other customs, were initiated into other studies,   
and had a wider horizon around them than in the   
seclusion of their native valleys. Many of them be-   
came expert dialecticians, and often made converts of   
the rich merchants with whom they traded, and the   
landlords in whose houses they lodged. The priests   
seldom cared to meet in argument the Waldensian   
missionary.   
 To maintain the truth in their own mountains was   
not the only object of this people. They felt their   
relations to the rest of Christendom. They sought   
to drive back the darkness, and re-conquer the king-   
dom which Rome had overwhelmed. They were an   
evangelistic as well as an evangelical Church. It   
was an old law among them that all who took orders   
in their Church should, before being eligible to a home   
charge, serve three years in the mission field. The   
youth on whose head the assembled barbes laid their   
hands saw in prospect not a rich benefice, but a possible   
martyrdom. The ocean they did not cross. Their   
mission field was the realms that lay outspread at   
the foot of their own mountains. They went forth   
two and two, concealing their real character under   
the guise of a secular profession, most commonly that   
of merchants or pedlars. They carried silks, jewellery,   
and other articles, at that time not easily purchasable   
save at distant marts, and they were welcomed as   
merchants where they would have been spurned as

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missionaries. The door of the cottage and the portal   
of the baron's castle stood equally open to them. But   
their address was mainly shown in selling, without   
money and without price, rarer and more valuable   
merchandise than the gems and silks which had procured   
them entrance. They took care to carry with them,   
concealed among their wares or about their persons,   
portions of the Word of God, their own transcrip-   
tion commonly, and to this they would draw the at-   
tention of the inmates. When they saw a desire to   
possess it, they would freely make a gift of it where   
the means of purchase were absent.   
 There was no kingdom of Southern and Central   
Europe to which these missionaries did not find their   
way, and where they did not leave traces of their   
visit in the disciples whom they made. On the west   
they penetrated into Spain. In Southern France they   
found congenial fellow-labourers in the Albigenses, by   
whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over   
Dauphine and Languedoe. On the east, descending the   
Rhine and the Danube, they leavened Germany, Bohemia,   
and Poland \* with their doctrines, their track being   
marked with the edifices for worship and the stakes   
of martyrdom that arose around their steps. Even the   
Seven-hilled City they feared not to enter, scattering   
the seed on ungenial soil, if perchance some of it might   
take root and grow. Their naked feet and coarse   
woollen garments made them somewhat marked figures,   
in the streets of a city that clothed itself in purple   
   
\* Stranski, apud, Lenfant's *Concile de Constance*, quoted by Count   
Valerian Krasinski in his *History of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of   
the Reformation in Poland*, vol. i., p. 53 ; Lond., 1838. Illyricus   
Flaccius, in hia *Catalogue Testium Veritatis* (Amstelodami, 1679),   
says: "Pars Valdensium in Germaniam transiit atque apud Bohemoa,   
in Polonia ao Livonia sedem fixit." Leger saya that the Waldenses   
had, ahout the year 1210, Churchea in Slavonia, Sarmatia, and Livonia.   
(Histoire Générale des Eglises Evangiliques des Vallées du Piedmont   
ou Vaudois, vol. ii., pp. 336, 337 ; 1669.)   
  
WALDENSIAN MISSIONARIES IN GUISE OF PEDLARS.

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and fine linen; and when their real errand was dis-   
covered, as sometimes chanced, the rulers of Christen-   
dom took care to further, in their own way, the   
springing of the seed, by watering it with the blood of   
the men who had sowed it. \*   
 Thus did the Bible in those ages, veiling its majesty   
and its mission, travel silently through Christendom,   
entering homes and hearts, and there making its abode.   
From her lofty seat Rome looked down with contempt   
upon the Book and its humble bearers. She aimed   
at bowing the necks of kings, thinking if they were   
obedient meaner men would not dare revolt, and so sho   
took little heed of a power which, weak as it seemed,   
was destined at a future day to break in pieces the   
fabric of her dominion. By-and-by she began to be   
uneasy, and to have a boding of calamity. The pene-   
trating eye of Innocent III. detected the quarter whence   
'danger was to arise. He saw in the labours of these   
humble men the beginning of a movement which, if   
permitted to go on and gather strength, would one   
day sweep away all that it had taken the toils and   
intrigues of centuries to achieve. He straightway   
commenced those terrible crusades which wasted the   
sowers but watered the seed, and helped to bring on,   
at its appointed hour, the catastrophe which he sought to   
avert.   
  
\* M'Crie, *Hist. Ref. in Italy*, p. 4.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST PERSECUTIONS OF THE WALDENSES.

Their Unique Position in Christendom-Their Twofold Testimony— They   
 Witness against Rome and for Protestantism— Hated by Rome— The   
 Cottian Alps — Albigenses and Waldenses— The Waldensian Territory   
 Proper— Papal Testimony to the Flourishing State of their Church   
 in the Fourteenth Century — Early Bulls against them— Tragedy of   
 Christmas, 1400— Constancy of the Waldenses— Crusade of Pope In-   
 nocent VIII.— His Bull of 1487— The Army Assembles— Two Frightful   
 Tempests approach the Valleys.

The Waldenses stand apart and alone in the Chris-   
tian world. Their place on the surface of Europe is   
unique; their position in history is not less unique ; and   
the end appointed them to fulfil is one which has been   
assigned to them alone, no other people being permitted   
to share it with them.   
 The Waldenses bear a twofold testimony. Like the   
snow-clad peaks amid which their dwelling is placed,   
which look down upon the plains of Italy on the one   
side, and the provinces of France on the other, this   
people stand equally related to primitive ages and   
modern times, and give by no means equivocal testimony   
respecting both Rome and the Reformation. If they   
are old, then Rome is new; if they are pure, then Rome   
is corrupt; and if they have retained the faith of the   
apostles, it follows incontestably that Rome has departed   
from it. That the Waldensian faith and worship existed   
many centuries before Protestantism arose is undeniable;   
the proofs and monuments of this fact lie scattered over   
all the histories and all the lands of mediaeval Europe;   
but the antiquity of the Waldenses is the antiquity of

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Protestantism. The Church of the Reformation was in   
the loins of the Waldensian Church ages before the   
birth of Luther; her first cradle was placed amid those   
terrors and sublimities, those ice-clad peaks and great   
bulwarks of rock. In their dispersions over so many   
lands — over France, the Low Countries, Germany, Po-   
land, Bohemia, Moravia, England, Calabria, Naples —   
the Waldenses sowed the seeds of that great spiritual   
revival which, beginning in the days of Wicliffe, and   
advancing in the times of Luther and Calvin, awaits its   
full consummation in the ages to come.   
 In the place which the Church of the Alps has held,   
and the office she has discharged, we see the reason of   
that peculiar and bitter hostility which Rome has ever   
borne this holy and venerable community. It was   
natural that Rome should wish to efface so conclusive a   
proof of her apostacy, and silence a witness whose testi-   
mony so emphatically corroborates the position of Pro-   
testantism. The great bulwark of the Reformed Church   
is the Word of God; but next to this is the pre-existenee   
of a community spread throughout Western Christendom,   
with doctrines and worship substantially one with those   
of the Reformation.   
 The persecutions of this remarkable people form one   
of the most heroic pages of the Church's history. These   
persecutions, protracted through many centuries, were   
endured with a patience, a constancy, a bravery, honour-   
able to the Gospel as well as to those simple people,   
whom the Gospel converted into heroes and martyrs.   
Their resplendent virtues illumined the darkness of their   
age; and we turn with no little relief from a Chris-   
tendom sunk in barbarism and superstition to this   
remnant of an ancient people, who here in their moun-   
tain-engirdled territory practised the simplicity, the   
piety, and the heroism of a better age. It is the main   
object of this work to deal with those persecutions of   
the Waldenses which connect themselves with the

THE LAND OF ANCIENT PROTESTANTISM. 21

Reformation and which were, in fact, part of that mighty   
effort made by Rome to extinguish Protestantism. But   
we must introduce ourselves to the great tragedy hy a   
brief notice of the attacks which led up to it.   
 That part of the Alpine chain which extends be-   
tween Turin on the east and Grenoble on the west is   
known as the Cottian Alps. This is the dwelling-place   
of the Waldenses, the land of ancient Protestantism. On   
the west the mountains slope towards the plains of France,   
and on the east they run down to those of Piedmont.   
That line of glittering summits, conspicuous among   
which is the lofty snow-clad peak of Monte Viso on   
the west, and the craggy escarpments of Genevre on the   
east, forms the boundary between the Albigenses and   
the Waldenses, the two bodies of these early witnesses.   
On the western slope were the dwellings of the former   
people, and on the eastern those of the latter. Not   
entirely so, however, for the Waldenses, crossing the   
summits, had taken possession of the more elevated   
portion of the western declivities, and scarcely was   
there a valley in which their villages and sanctuaries   
were not to be found. But in the lower valleys, and   
more particularly in the vast and fertile plains of   
Dauphiné and Provence, spread out at the foot of the   
Alps, the inhabitants were mainly of cis-Alpine or Gallic   
extraction, and are known in history as the Albigenses.   
How nourishing they were, how numerous and opulent   
their towns, how rich their corn-ilelds and vineyards,   
and how polished the manners and cultured the genius   
of the people, we have already said. Innocent III.   
exacted terrible expiation of them for their attachment   
to a purer Christianity than that of Rome. He   
launched his bull; he sent forth his inquisitors; and   
soon the fertility and beauty of the region were swept   
away; city and sanctuary sank in ruins ; and the   
plains so recently covered with smiling fields were con-   
verted into a desert. The work of destruction had

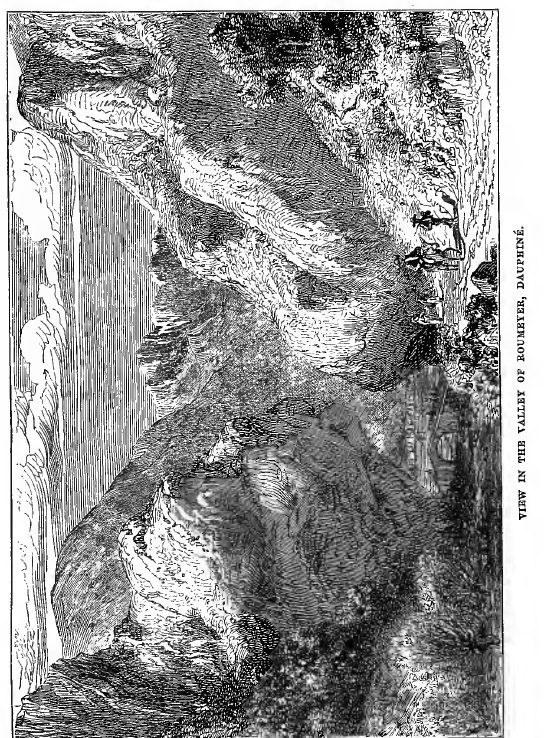
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been done with tolerable completeness on the west of   
the Alps; and after a short pause it was commenced   
on the east, it being resolved to pursue these confessors   
of a pure faith across the mountains, and attack them   
in those grand valleys which open into Italy, where   
they lay entrenched, as it were, amid dense chestnut   
forests and mighty pinnacles of rock.   
 We place ourselves at the foot of the eastern de-   
clivity, about thirty miles to the west of Turin. Behind   
us is the vast sweep of the plain of Piedmont. Above   
us in front tower the Alps, here forming a crescent of   
grand mountains, extending from the escarped summit   
that leans over Pinerolo on the right, to the pyramidal   
peak of Monte Viso, which cleaves the ebon like a horn   
of silver, and marks the farthest limit of the Waldensian   
territory on the left. In the bosom of that mountain   
crescent, shaded by its chestnut forests, and encircled by   
its glittering peaks, are hung the famous valleys of that   
people whose martyrdoms we are now to narrate.   
 In the centre of the picture, right before us, rises the   
pillar-like Castelluzzo; behind it is the towering mass   
of the Vandalin; and in front, as if to bar the way   
against the entrance of any hostile force into this sacred   
territory, is drawn the long, low hill of Bricherasio,   
feathery with woods, bristling with great rocks, and   
leaving open, between its rugged mass and the spurs of   
Monte Friolante on the west, only a narrow avenue,   
shaded by walnut and acacia trees, which leads up to the   
point where the valleys, spreading out fan-like, bury   
themselves in the mountains that open their stony arms   
to receive them. Historians have enumerated some   
thirty persecutions enacted on this little spot.   
 One of the earliest dates in the martyr-history of   
this people is 1332, or thereabouts, for the time is not   
distinctly marked. The reigning Pope was John XXII.   
Desirous of resuming the work of Innocent III., he   
ordered the inquisitors to repair to the Valleys of Lucerna

THE POPE AND THE HEKETICS OF THE VALLEYS. 23

and Perosa, and execute the laws of the Vatican against   
the heretics that peopled them. What success attended   
the expedition is not known, and we instance it chiefly   
on this account, that the bull commanding it bears   
undesigned testimony to the then flourishing condition   
of the Waldensian Church, inasmuch as it complains   
that synods, which the Pope calls ''chapters," were   
wont to assemble in the Valley of Angrogna, attended   
by 500 delegates.\* This was before Wicliffe had begun   
his career in England.   
 After this date scarcely was there a Pope who did   
not bear unintentional testimony to their great numbers   
and wide diffusion. In 1352 we find Pope Clement VI.   
charging the Bishop of Embrun, with whom he asso-   
ciates a Francisan friar and inquisitor, to essay the   
purification of those parts adjoining his diocese which   
were known to be infected with heresy. The territorial   
lords and city syndics were invited to aid him. While   
providing for the heretics of the Valleys, the Pope did   
not overlook those farther off. He urged the Dauphin,   
Charles of France, and Louis, King of Naples, to seek   
out and punish those of their subjects who had strayed   
from the faith. Clement referred doubtless to the   
Vaudois colonies, which are known to have existed   
in that age at Naples. The fact that the heresy of   
the Waldensian mountains extended to the plains at   
their feet, is attested by the letter of the Pope to   
Joanna, wife of the King of Naples, who owned lands   
in the Marquisate§ of Saluzzo, near the Valleys, urging   
her to purge her territory of the heretics that lived in it.   
 The zeal of the Pope, however, was but indifferently   
seconded by that of the secular lords. The men they   
were enjoined to exterminate were the most industrious   
  
\* Compare Antoine Monastier, *History of the Vaudois Church*,   
p. 121 (Lond., 1848), with Alexis Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, p. 8   
(Loud., 1852).   
§ Monastier, *Hist. Vaudois Church* p. 123.

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and peaceable of their subjects; and willing as they   
no doubt were to oblige the Pope, they were naturally   
averse to incur so great a loss as would be caused by   
the destruction of the flower of their populations. Be-   
sides, the princes of that age were often at war among   
themselves, and had not much leisure or inclination to   
make war on the Pope's behalf. Therefore the Papal   
thunder sometimes rolled harmlessly over the Valleys,   
and the mountain-home of these confessors was wonder-   
fully shielded till very nearly the era of the Reforma-   
tion. We find Gregory XL, in 1373, writing to   
Charles V. of France, to complain that his officers   
thwarted his inquisitors in Dauphiné; that the Papal   
judges were not permitted to institute proceedings against   
the suspected without the consent of the civil judge;   
and that the disrespect to the spiritual tribunal was   
sometimes carried so far as to release condemned   
heretics from prison.\* Notwithstanding this leniency —   
so culpable in the eyes of Rome — on the part of princes   
and magistrates, the inquisitors were able to make not a   
few victims. These acts of violence provoked reprisals   
at times on the part of the Waldenses. On one occasion   
(1375) the Popish city of Susa was attacked, the Do-   
minican convent forced, and the inquisitor put to death.   
Other Dominicans were called to expiate their rigour   
against the Vaudois with the penalty of their lives. An   
obnoxious inquisitor of Turin is said to have been slain   
on the highway near Bricherasio.§   
 There came evil days to the Popes themselves.   
First, they were chased to Avignon; next, the yet   
greater calamity of the "schism" befel them; but then-   
own afflictions had not the effect of softening then - hearts   
towards the confessors of the Alps. During the clouded   
era of then - "captivity," and the tempestuous days of   
the schism, they pursued with the same inflexible rigour   
their policy of extermination. They were ever and anon   
  
\* Monastier, p. 123. § *Ibid*.   
  
  
  


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fulminating their persecuting edicts, and their inquisitors   
were scouring the Valleys in pursuit of victims. An   
inquisitor of the name of Borelli had 150 Vaudois men,   
hesides a great number of women, girls, and even young   
children, brought to Grenoble and burned alive.\*   
 The closing days of the year 1400 witnessed a terrible   
tragedy, the memory of which has not been obliterated   
by the many greater which have followed it. The scene   
of this catastrophe was the Valley of Pragelas, one of   
the higher reaches of Perosa, which opens near Pinerolo,   
and is watered by the Clusone. It was the Christmas   
of 1400, and the inhabitants dreaded no attack, believing   
themselves sufficiently protected by the snows which   
then lay deep on their mountains. They were destined   
to experience the bitter fact that the rigours of the   
season had not quenched the fire of their persecutor's   
malice. Borelli, at the head of an armed troop,   
broke suddenly into Pragelas, meditating the entire   
extinction of its population. The miserable inhabitants   
fled in haste to the mountains, carrying on their   
shoulders their old men, their sick, and their infants,   
knowing what fate awaited them should they leave   
them behind. In their flight a great many were over-   
taken and slain. Nightfall brought them deliverance   
from the pursuit, but no deliverance from horrors   
not less dreadful. The main body of the fugitives   
wandered in the direction of Macel, in the storm-swept   
and now ice-clad valley of San Martino, where they   
encamped on a summit which has ever since, in memory   
of the event, borne the name of the Alberge or Refuge.   
Without shelter, without food, the frozen snow around   
them, the winter's sky overhead, their sufferings were   
inexpressibly great. When morning broke what a   
heartrending spectacle did day disclose! Some of the   
miserable group lost their hands and feet from frostbite;   
while others were stretched out on the snow, stiffened   
  
 \* Honastier, p. 123.   
  
 PURGING THE VALLEYS. 27

corpses. Fifty young children, some say eighty, were   
found dead with cold, some lying on the bare ice, others   
locked in the frozen arms of their mothers, who had   
perished on that dreadful night along with their babes.\*   
In the Valley of Pragelas, to this day, sire recites to son   
the tale of that Christmas tragedy.   
 The century, the opening of which had been so fear-   
fully marked, passed on amid continuous executions of   
the Waldenses. In the absence of such catastrophes as   
that of Christmas, 1400, individual Vaudois were kid-   
napped by the inquisitors, ever on the track for them, or   
waylaid, whenever they ventured down into the plain of   
Piedmont, and were carried to Turin and other towns,   
and burned alive. But Rome saw that she was making   
no progress in the extermination of a heresy which had   
found a seat amid these hills, as firm as it was ancient.   
The numbers of the Waldenses were not thinned; their   
constancy was not shaken, they still refused to enter the   
Roman Church, and they met all the edicts and inquisi-   
tors, all the torturings and burnings of their great   
persecutor, with a resistance as unyielding as that offered   
by their rocks to the tempests of hail and snow which   
the whirlwinds of winter hurl against them.   
 It was the year 1487. A great blow was meditated.   
The process of purging the Valleys languished. Pope   
Innocent VIII., who then filled the Papal chair, re-   
membered how his renowned namesake, Innocent III.,   
by an act of summary vengeance, had swept the Albi-   
gensian heresy from the south of France. Imitating   
the vigour of his predecessor, he would purge the   
Valleys as effectually and as speedily as Innocent III.   
had done the plains of Dauphine and Provence.   
 The first step of the Pope was to issue a bull,   
denouncing as heretical those whom he delivered over to   
  
\* *Histoire Generate des Eglises Evangittques des Valles de Piedmont,   
on Vaudoises*. Par Jean Leger. Part ii., pp. 6, 7. Leyden, 1669.   
Monastier, pp. 123, 124.

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slaughter. This bull, after the manner of all such   
documents, was expressed in terms as sanctimonious as   
its spirit was inexorably cruel. It brings no charge   
against these men, as lawless, idle, dishonest, or dis-   
orderly j their fault was that they did not worship as   
Innocent worshipped, and that they practised a "simu-   
lated sanctity," which had the effect of seducing the   
sheep of the true fold, therefore he orders "that   
malicious and abominable sect of malignants" if they   
"refuse to abjure, to be crushed bike venomous snakes.-"\*   
 To carry out his bull, Innocent VIII. appointed   
Albert Cataneo, Archdeacon of Cremona, his legate,   
entrusting to him the chief conduct of the enterprise.   
He fortified him, moreover, with Papal missives to all   
princes, dukes, and powers, within whose dominions any   
Vaudois were to be found. The Pope especially accre-   
dited him to Charles VIII. of France and Charles II.   
of Savoy, commanding them to support him with the   
whole power of their arms. The bull invited all   
Catholics to take up the cross against the heretics; and   
to stimulate them in this pious work it "absolved from   
all ecclesiastical pains and penalties, general and par-   
ticular; it released all who joined the crusade from any   
oaths they might have taken; it legitimatised their title   
to any property they might have illegally acquired; and   
promised remission of all their sins to such as should   
kill any heretic. It annulled all contracts made in   
favour of Vaudois, ordered their domestics to abandon   
them, forbade all persons to give them any aid what-   
ever, and empowered all persons to take possession of   
their property."   
 These were powerful incentives — plenary pardon and   
unrestrained licence. They were hardly needed to   
  
\* The bull is given in full in Leger, who also says that he had   
made a faithful copy of it, and lodged it with other documents in the   
University Library of Cambridge. (Hist. Gen. des Eylixes Vaud.,   
part ii., pp. 7 — 15.)

THE POPE'S BULL OF EXTERMINATION. 29

awaken the zeal of the neighbouring populations, always   
too ready to show their devotion to Rome by spilling   
the blood and making a booty of the goods of the   
Waldenses. The King of France and the Duke of   
Savoy lent a willing ear to the summons from the   
Vatican. They made haste to unfurl their banners, and   
enlist soldiers in this holy cause, and soon a numerous   
army was on its march to sweep from the mountains   
where they had dwelt from immemorial time, these con-   
fessors of the Gospel faith pure and undefiled. In the   
train of this armed host came a motley crowd of volun-   
teers, "vagabond adventurers," says Muston, "am-   
bitious fanatics, reckless pillagers, merciless assassins,   
assembled from all parts of Italy"\* — a horde of brigands   
in short, the worthy tools of the man whose bloody work   
they were assembled to do.   
 Before all these arrangements were finished it was the   
month of June of 1488. The Pope's bull was talked of in   
all countries ; and the din of preparation rung far and near,   
for it was not only on the Waldensian mountains, but   
on the Waldensian race, wherever dispersed, in Ger-   
many, in Calabria, and in other countries, that this   
terrible blow was to fall.§ All kings were invited to   
gird on the sword, and come to the help of the Church   
in the execution of her purpose of effecting an exter-   
mination of her enemies that should never need to be   
repeated. Wherever a Vaudois foot trod, the soil was   
polluted, and had to be cleansed; wherever a Vaudois   
breathed, the air was tainted, and must be purified;   
wherever Vaudois psalm or prayer ascended, there was   
the infection of heresy, and around the spot a cordon   
must be drawn to protect the spiritual health of the   
district. The Pope's bull was thus very universal in its   
application, and almost the only people left ignorant of   
the commotion it had excited, and the bustle of prejoara-   
  
\* Muston, *Israel of the Alps*, p. 10.   
§ Leger, livr. ii., p. 7.

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tion it had called forth, were those, poor men on whom   
this terrible tempest was about to burst.   
 The joint army numbered about 18,000 regular   
soldiers. This force was swelled by the thousands of   
ruffians, already mentioned, drawn together by the   
spiritual and temporal rewards to be earned in this work   
of combined piety and pillage.\* The Piedmontese   
division of this host directed their course towards the   
"Valleys" proper, on the Italian side of the Alps.   
The French division, marching from the north, advanced   
to attack the inhabitants of the Dauphinese Alps, where   
the Albigensian heresy, recovering somewhat its terrible   
excision by Innocent III., had begun again to take root.   
Two storms, from opposite points, or rather from all   
points, were approaching those mighty mountains, the   
sanctuary and citadel of the primitive faith. That   
lamp is about to be extinguished at last, which has   
burned here during so many ages, and survived so many   
tempests. The mailed hand of the Pope is uplifted, and   
we wait to see the blow fall.   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 26

CHAPTER IV.

CATANEO'S EXPEDITION (1488) AGAINST THE DAUPHINESE

AND PIEDMONTESE CONFESSORS.

The Confessors of the Danphinese Alps— Attacked— Flee to Mont Pelvoux   
—Retreat into a Cave— Are Suffocated— French Crusaders Cross the   
Alps— Enter the Valley of Pragelas— Piedmontese Army Advances   
against La Torre— Deputation of Waldensian Patriarchs— The Valley   
of Lueerna— Villaro— Bobbio — Cataneo's Plan of Campaign— His   
Soldiers Cross the Col Julien— Grandeurs of the Pass— Valley of Prali   
—Defeat of Cataneo's Expedition.

We see at this moment two armies on the march to   
attack the Christians inhabiting the Cottian and   
Dauphinese Alps. The sword now unsheathed is to   
be returned to its scabbard only when there breathes   
no longer in these mountains a single confessor of   
the faith condemned in the bull of Innocent VIII.   
The plan of the campaign was to attack at the same   
time on two opposite points of the great mountain-   
chain; and advancing, the one army from the south-   
east, and the other from the north-west, to meet in   
the Valley of Angrogna, the centre of the territory,   
and there strike the final blow. Let us follow first   
the French division of this host, that which is ad-   
vancing against the Alps of Dauphine.   
 This portion of the crusaders was led by a daring   
and cruel man, skilled in such adventures, the Lord   
of La Palu. He ascended the mountains with his   
fanatics, and entered the Vale of Loyse, a deep gorge   
overhung by towering mountains. The inhabitants,   
seeing an armed force twenty times their own number   
enter their valley, despaired of being able to resist them,

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and prepared for flight. They placed their old people   
and children in rustic carts, together with their domestic   
utensils, and such store of victuals as the urgency of   
the occasion permitted them to collect, and driving   
their herds before them, they began to climb the   
rugged slopes of Mount Pelvoux, which rises some   
six thousand feet over the level of the valley. They   
sang canticles as they climbed the steeps, which served   
at once to smooth their rugged path, and to dispel their   
terrors. Not a few were overtaken and slaughtered,   
and theirs was perhaps the happier lot.   
 About half-way up there is an immense cavern,   
called Aigue-Froid, from the cold springs that gush   
out from its rocky walls. In front of the cavern is   
a platform of rock, where the spectator sees beneath   
him only fearful precipices, which must be clambered   
over before one can reach the entrance to the grotto.   
The roof of the cave forms a magnificent arch, which   
gradually subsides and contracts into a narrow passage,   
or throat, and then widens once more, and forms a   
roomy hall of irregular form. Into this grotto, as   
into an impregnable castle, did the Vaudois enter.   
Their women, infants, and old men, they placed in   
the inner hall; their cattle and sheep they distributed   
along the lateral cavities of the grotto. The able-   
bodied men posted themselves at the entrance. Having   
barricaded with huge stones both the doorway of   
the cave and the path that led to it, they deemed   
themselves secure. They had provisions to last, Ca-   
taneo says in his Memoirs, "two years;" and it   
would cost them little effort to hurl headlong down   
the precipices any one who should attempt to scale   
them in order to reach the entrance of the cavern.   
 But a device of their pursuer rendered all these   
precautions and defences vain. La Palu ascended the   
mountain on the other side, and approaching the cave   
from above, let down his soldiers by ropes from the

THE TRAGEDY IN THE TALE OF LOYSE. 33

precipice overhanging the entrance to the grotto. The   
platform in front was thus secured by his soldiers.   
The Vaudois might have cut the ropes, and dispatched   
their foes as they were being lowered one by one,   
but the boldness of the manoeuvre would seem to   
have paralysed them. They retreated into the cavern   
to find in it their grave. La Palu saw the danger   
of permitting his men to follow them into the depths   
of their hiding-place. He adopted the easier and safer   
method of piling up at its entrance all the wood he   
could collect and setting fire to it. A huge volume   
of black smoke began to roll into the cave, leaving   
to the unhappy inmates the miserable alternative of   
rushing out and falling by the sword that waited for   
them, or of remaining in the interior to be stifled by   
the murky vapour.\* Some rushed out, and were mas-   
sacred; but the greater part remained till death slowly   
approached them by suffocation. "When the cavern   
was afterwards examined.'' says Muston, "there were   
found in it 400 infants, suffocated in their cradles,   
or in the arms of their dead mothers. Altogether   
there perished in this cavern more than 3,000 Vaudois,   
including the entire population of Val Loyse. Cataneo   
distributed the property of these unfortunates among   
the vagabonds who accompanied him, and never again   
did the Vaudois Church raise its head in these blood-   
stained valleys.''''§   
 The terrible stroke that fell on the Vale of Loyse   
was the shielding of the neighbouring valleys of Ar-   
gentine and Fraissinière. Their inhabitants had been   
destined to destruction also, but the fate of their co-   
religionists taught them that their only chance of safety   
lay in resistance. Accordingly, barricading the passes   
of their valleys, they showed such a front to the foe   
when he advanced, that he deemed it prudent to turn   
  
\* Monastier, p. 128.   
§ Muston, p. 20.

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away and leave them in peace. This devastating   
tempest now swept along to discharge its violence   
on other valleys. "One would have thought," to use   
the words of Muston, "that the plague had passed   
along the track over which its march lay: it was   
only the inquisitors."   
 A detachment of the French army struck across the   
Alps in a south-east direction, holding their course to-   
ward the Waldensian Valleys, there to unite with the   
main body of the crusaders under Cataneo. They   
slaughtered, pillaged, and burned as they went onward,   
and at last arrived with dripping swords in the Valley   
of Pragelas.   
 The Valley of Pragelas, where we now see these   
assassins, sweeps along, from almost the summit of   
the Alps, to the south, watered by the rivers Clusone   
and Dora, and opens on the great plain of Piedmont,   
having Pinerolo on the one side and Susa on the other.   
It was then and long after under the dominion of   
France. "Prior to the revocation of the Edict of   
Nantes,' says Muston, "the Vaudois of these valleys   
[that is, Pragelas, and the lateral vales branching out   
from it] possessed eleven parishes, eighteen churches,   
and sixty-four centres of religious assembling, where   
worship was celebrated morning and evening, in as   
many hamlets. It was in Laus, in Pragelas, that was   
held the famous synod where, 200 years before the Pro-   
testant Reformation, 140 Protestant pastors assembled,   
each accompanied by two or three lay deputies; and it was   
from the Val di Pragelas that the Gospel of God made   
its way into France prior to the fifteenth century."\*   
 This was the valley of Pragelas which had been the   
scene of the terrible tragedy of Christmas, 1400. Again   
terror, mourning, and death were carried into it. The   
peaceful inhabitants, who were expecting no such in-   
vasion, were busy reaping their harvests, when this   
  
\* Muston, part ii., p. 234.

CATANEO'S MISCELLANEOUS ARMY. 35

horde of assassins burst upon them. In the first panic   
they abandoned their dwellings and fled. Many were   
overtaken and slain; hamlets and whole villages were   
given to the flames; nor could the caves in which   
multitudes sought refuge afford any protection. The   
horrible barbarity of the Val Loyse was repeated in the   
Valley of Pragelas. Combustible materials were piled   
up and fires kindled at the mouths of these hiding-   
places; and when extinguished, all was silent within.   
Folded together in one motionless beap lay mother and   
babe, patriarch and stripling; while the fatal smoke,   
which had cast them into that deep sleep, was eddying   
along the roof, and slowly making its exit into the clear   
sunlit summer sky. But the course of this destruction   
was stayed. After the first surprise the inhabitants   
took heart, and turning upon their murderers drove them   
from their valley, exacting aheavy penalty in the pursuit   
for the ravages they had committed in it.   
 We now turn to the Piedmontese portion of this   
army. It was led by the Papal legate, Cataneo, in   
person. It was destined to operate against those valleys   
in Piedmont which were the most ancient seat of these   
religionists, and were deemed the stronghold of the   
Vaudois heresy. Cataneo repaired to Pinerolo, which   
adjoins the frontier of the doomed territory. Thence he   
dispatched a band of preaching monks to convert the   
men of the Valleys. These missionaries returned with-   
out having, so far as appears, made a single convert.   
The legate now put his soldiers in motion. Traversing   
the glorious plain, the Clusone gleaming out through   
rich corn-fields and vineyards on their left, and the   
mighty rampart of the hills, with their chestnut forests,   
their pasturages and snows, rising grandly on their   
right, and turning round the shoulder of the copse-clad   
Bricherasio, this army, with another army of pillagers   
and cut-throats in its rear, advanced up the long avenue   
that leads to La Torre, the capital of the Valleys, and

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sat down before it. They had come against a simple,   
unarmed people, who knew how to tend their vines, and   
lead their herds to pasture, but were ignorant of the art   
of war. It seemed as if the last hour of the Waldensian   
race had struck.   
 Seeing this mighty host before their Valleys, the   
Waldenses sent two of their patriarchs to request an   
interview with Cataneo, and turn, if possible, his heart   
to peace. John Campo and John Desiderio were dis-   
patched on this embassy. "Do not condemn us with-   
out hearing us," said they, "for we are Christians and   
faithful subjects; and our Barbes are prepared to prove,   
in public or in private, that our doctrines are conformable   
to the Word of God Our hope in God is greater   
than our desire to please rflen; beware how you draw   
down upon yourselves His anger by persecuting us; for   
remember that, if God so wills it, all the forces you   
have assembled against us will nothing avail."   
 These were weighty words, and they were meekly   
spoken, but as to changing Cataneo's purpose, or soften-   
ing the hearts of the ruffian-host which he led, they   
might as well have been addressed to the rocks which   
rose around the speakers. Nevertheless, they fell not to   
the ground.   
 Cataneo, believing that the Vaudois herdsmen would   
not stand an hour before his men-at-arms, and desirous   
of striking a finishing blow, divided his army into a   
number of attacking parties, which were to begin the   
battle on various points at the same time. The folly of   
extending his line so as to embrace the whole territory   
led to Cataneo's destruction; but his strategy was   
rewarded with a few small successes at first.   
 One troop was stationed at the entrance of the Val   
Lucerna; we shall follow its march till it disappears on   
the mountains which it hopes to conquer, and then we   
shall return and nan-ate the more decisive operations   
of tie campaign under Cataneo in the Val Angrogna.

THE MARCH OF CATANEO'S FORCES. 37   
  
The first step of the invaders was to occupy the town   
of La Torre, situated on the angle formed by the junction   
of the Val Lucerna and the Val Angrogna, the silver   
Pelice at its feet and the shadow of the Castelluzzo   
covering it. The soldiers were probably spared the   
necessity or denied the pleasure of slaughter, the inhabi-   
tants having fled to the mountains. The valley beyond   
La Torre is too open to admit of being defended, and the   
troop advanced along it unopposed. Than this theatre   
of war nothing in ordinary times is more peaceful,   
nothing more grand. A carpet of rich meadows clothes   
it from side to side; fruitful trees fleck it with their   
shadows j the Pelice waters it; and on either hand is a   
wall of mountains, whose sides display successive zones of   
festooned vines, golden grain, dark chestnut forests, and   
rich pasturages. Over these are hung stupendous battle-   
ments of rock; and above all, towering high in air, are   
the everlasting peaks in their robes of ice and snow. But   
the sublimities of nature were nothing to men whose   
thoughts were only of blood.   
 Pursuing their march up the valley, the soldiers next   
came to Villaro. It is situated about midway between   
the entrance and head of Lucerna, on a ledge of turf in   
the side of the great mountains, raised some 200 feet   
above the Pelice, which flows past at about a quarter of   
a mile's distance. The troop had little difficulty in tak-   
ing possession. Most of the inhabitants, warned of the   
approach of danger, had fled to the Alps. What Cataneo's   
troops inflicted on those who had been unable to make   
their escape, no history records. The half of Lucerna,   
with the towns of La Torre and Villaro and their hamlets,   
was in the occupation of Cataneo's soldiers ; their march   
so far had been a victorious one, though certainly not a   
glorious one, such victories as they had gained being only   
over unarmed peasants and bed-rid women.   
 Resuming their march the troop came next to   
Bobbio. The name of Bobbio is not unknown in classic

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story. It nestles at the base of gigantic cliffs, where   
the lofty summit of the Col la Croix points the way to   
France, and overhangs a path which apostolic feet may   
have trodden. The Pelice is seen forcing its way   
through the dark gorges of the mountains in a thunder-   
ing torrent, and meandering in a flood of silver along   
the valley.   
 At this point the grandeur of the Val Lucerna   
attains its height. Let us pause to survey the scene   
that must here have met the eyes of Cataneo's soldiers,   
and which, one would suppose, might have turned them   
from their cruel purpose. Immediately behind Bobhio   
shoots up the "Barion," symmetrical as Egyptian obe-   
lisk, but far taller and more massive. Its summit rises   
3,000 feet above the roofs of the little town. Compared   
with this majestic monolith the proudest monument of   
Europe's proudest capital is a mere toy. Yet even the   
Barion is but one item in this assemblage of glories.   
Overtopping it behind, and sweeping round the extremity   
of the valley, is a glorious amphitheatre of crags and   
precipices, enclosed by a background of great mountains,   
some rounded like domes, others sharp as needles; and   
rising out of this sea of hills, are the grander and   
loftier forms of the Alp des Rousses and the Col de   
Malaure, which guard the gloomy pass that winds its   
way through splintered rocks and under overhanging   
precipices, till it opens into the valleys of the French   
Protestants, and lands the traveller on the plains of   
Dauphiné. In this unrivalled amphitheatre sits Bohbio,   
in summer buried in blossoms and fruit, and in winter   
wrapped in the shadows of its great mountains, and the   
mists of their tempests. What a contrast between the   
still repose and grand sublimity of nature and the   
dreadful errand on which the men now pressing forward   
to the little town are bent! To them nature speaks in   
vain! they are engrossed with but one thought.   
 The capture of Bobbio — an easy task — put the   
  
  
  
  
 VIEW OF LA TORRE.

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soldiers in possession of the entire Valley of Lucerna;   
its inhabitants had been chased to the Alps, or their   
blood mingled with the waters of their own Pelice.   
Other and remoter expeditions were now projected.   
Their plan was to traverse the Col Julien, sweep down   
on the Valley of Prali, which lies on the north of it,   
chastise its inhabitants, pass on to the Valleys of San   
Martino and Perosa, and pursuing the circuit of the   
Valleys, and clearing the ground as they went onward   
of its inveterate heresy, at least of its heretics, join the   
main body of crusaders, who, they expected, would by   
this time have finished their work in the Valley of An-   
grogna, and all together celebrate their victory. They   
would then be able to say that they had gone the round   
of the Waldensian territory, and had at last effected the   
long-meditated work, so often attempted, but hitherto in   
vain, of the utter extirpation of its heresy. But the war   
was destined to have a very different termination.   
 The expedition across the Col Julien was immediately   
commenced. A corps of 700 men was detached from   
the army in Lueerna for this service.\* The ascent of   
the mountain opens immediately on the north side of   
Bobbio. We see the soldiers toiling upwards on the   
track, which is a mere foot-path formed by the herdsmen.   
At every short distance they pass the thick-planted   
chalets and hamlets sweetly embowered amid mantling   
vines, or the branches of the apple and cherry tree, or   
the goodlier chestnut; but the inhabitants have fled.   
They have now reached a great height on the mountain-   
side. Beneath is Bobbio, a speck of brown. There   
is the Valley of Lueerna, a ribbon of green, with a   
thread of silver woven into it, and lying along amid   
masses of mighty rocks. There, across Lueerna, are   
the great mountains that enclose the Valley of Bora,   
standing up in the silent sky; on the right are the   
spiky crags that bristle along the Pass of Mirabouc,   
  
 \* Monastier, p. 129.

THE COL JULIEN EXPEDITION. 41

that leads to France, and yonder in the east is a glimpse   
of the far-extending Plains of Piedmont.   
 But the summit is yet a long way off, and the   
soldiers of the Papal legate, bearing their weapons, to be   
employed, not in venturesome battle, but in cowardly   
massacre, toil up the ascent. As they gain on the   
mountain, they look down on pinnacles which half an   
hour before had looked down on them. Other heights,   
tall as the former, still rise above them; they climb to   
these airy spires, which in their turn sink beneath their   
feet. This process they repeat again and again, and   
at last they come out upon the downs that clothe the   
shoulders of the mountain. Now it is that the scene   
around them becomes one of stupendous and inexpress-   
ible grandeur. Away to the east, now fully under the   
eye, is the plain of Piedmont, green as meadow, and level   
as ocean. At their feet yawn gorges and abysses, while   
spiky pinnacles peer up from below as if to buttress the   
mountain. The horizon is filled with Alpine peaks, con-   
spicuous among which, on the east, is the Col la Vechera,   
whose snow-clad summit draws the eye to the more than   
classic valley over which it towers, where the Earbes in   
ancient days were wont to assemble in synod, and whence   
their missionaries went forth, at the peril of life, to   
distribute the Scriptures and sow the seed of the   
Kingdom. It was not unmarked, doubtless, by this   
corps, forming, as they meant it should do, the ter-   
minating point of their expedition in the Val di An-   
grogna. On the west, the crowning glory of the scene   
was Monte Viso, standing up in bold relief in the ebon   
vault, in a robe of silver. But in vain had Nature   
spread out her magnificence before men who had neither   
eyes to see nor hearts to feel her glory.   
 Climbing on their hands and knees the steep grassy   
slope in which the pass terminates, they looked down   
from the summit on the Valley of Prali, at that moment   
a scene of peace. Its great snow-clad hills, conspicuous

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among which is the Col d'Abries, kept guard around it.   
Down their sides rolled foaming torrents, which, uniting   
in the valley, flowed along in a full and rapid river.   
Over the bosom of the plain were scattered numerous   
hamlets. Suddenly on the mountains above had   
gathered this flock of vultures that with greedy eyes   
were looking down upon their prey. Impatient to   
begin their work, the 700 assassins rushed down on   
the plain.   
 The troop had reckoned that, no tidings of their   
approach having reached this secluded valley, they   
would fall upon its unarmed peasants as falls the ava-   
lanche, and crush them. But it was not to be so.   
Instead, of fleeing, panic-struck, as the invaders expected,   
the men of Prali hastily assembled, and stood to their   
defence. Battle was joined at the hamlet of Pommiers.   
The weapons of the Vaudois were rude, but their trust   
in God, and their indignation at the cowardly and bloody   
assault, gave them strength and courage. The Pied-   
montese soldiers, wearied with the rugged, slippery   
tracks they had traversed, fell beneath the blows of   
their opponents. Every man of them was cut down   
with the exception of one ensign.\* Of all the 700, he   
alone survived. During the carnage, he made his escape,   
and ascending the banks of a mountain torrent, he crept   
into a cavity which the summer heats had formed in a   
mass of snow. There he remained hid for some days;   
at last, cold and hunger drove him forth to cast himself   
upon the mercy of the men of Prali. They were gene-   
rous enough to pardon this solitary survivor of the host   
that had come to massacre them. They sent him back   
across the Col Julien, to tell those from whom he had   
come that the Vaudois had courage to fight for their   
hearths and altars, and that of the army of 700 which   
they had sent to slay them, he only had escaped to carry   
tidings of the fate which had befallen his companions.   
  
\* Monastier, p. 130.

CHAPTER V.

FAILURE OF CATANEO'S EXPEDITION.

The Valley of Angrogna— An Alternative— The Waldenses Prepare for   
 Battle— Cataneo's Repulse — His Rage — He Renews the Attempt-   
 Enters Angrogna with his Army — Advances to the Barrier— Enters   
 the Chasm— The Waldenses on the point of being Cut to Pieces— The   
 Mountain Mist— Deliverance— Utter Rout of the Papal Army— Pool   
 of Saquet— Sufferings of the Waldenses— Extinction of the Invading   
 Host— Deputation to their Prince— Vaudois Children— Peace.

The camp of Cataneo was pitched almost at the gates of   
La Torre, beneath the shadow of the Castelluzzo. The   
Papal legate is about to try to force his way into the Val   
di Angrogna. This valley opens hard by the spot where   
the legate had established his camp, and runs on for   
a dozen miles into the Alps, a magnificent succession   
of narrow gorges and open dells, walled throughout   
by majestic mountains, and terminating in a noble   
circular basin — the Pra del Tor — which is set round   
with snowy peaks, and forms the most venerated spot   
in all the Waldensian territory, inasmuch as it was   
the seat of their college, and the meeting-place of their   
Barbes.   
 In the Pra del Tor, or Meadow of the Tower, Cataneo   
expected to surprise the mass of the Waldensian people,   
now gathered into it as being the strongest refuge   
which their hills afforded. There, too, he expected   
to be joined by the corps which he had sent round by   
Lucerna to make the circuit of the Valleys, and after   
devastating Prali and San Martino, to climb the mountain   
barrier and join their companions in the Pra, little   
imagining that the soldiers he had dispatched on that

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errand of massacre were now enriching with their corpses   
the Valleys they had been sent to subdue. In that same   
spot where the Barbes had so often met in synod, and   
enacted rules for the government of their Church and the   
spread of their faith, the Papal legate would reunite his   
victorious host, and finish the campaign by proclaiming   
that now the Waldensian heresy, root and branch, was   
extinct.   
 The Waldenses — their humble supplication for peace   
having been contemptuously rejected, as we have already   
said — had three courses in their choice — to go to mass,   
to be butchered as sheep, or to fight for their lives. They   
chose the last, and made ready for battle. But first   
they must remove to a place of safety all who were un-   
able to bear arms.   
 Packing up their kneading-troughs, their ovens, and   
other culinary utensils, laying their aged on their   
shoulders, and their sick in couches, and leading their   
children by the hand, they began to climb the hills, in   
the direction of the Pra del Tor, at the head of the Val   
di Angrogna. Transporting their household stuff, they   
could be seen traversing the rugged paths, and making   
the mountains resound with psalms, which they sweetly   
sung as they journeyed up the ascent. Those who re-   
mained busied tbemselves in manufacturing pikes and   
other weapons of defence and attack, in repairing the   
barricades, in arranging themselves into fighting parties,   
and assigning to the various corps the posts they were   
to defend.   
 Cataneo now put his soldiers in motion. Advancing   
to near the town of La Torre, they made a sharp turn to   
the right, and entered the Val di Angrogna. Its opening   
offers no obstruction, being soft and even as any meadow   
in all England. By-and-by it begins to swell into   
the heights of Rocomaneot, where the Vaudois had   
resolved to make a stand. Their fighting men were   
posted along its ridge. Their army was of the simplest.

A VAUDOIS VICTORY. 45   
  
The bow was almost their only weapon of attack.   
They wore bucklers of skin, covered with the bark of   
the chestnut-tree, the better to resist thrust of pike   
or cut of sword. In the hollow behind, protected by   
the rising ground on which their fathers, husbands,   
and brothers were posted, were a number of women   
and children, gathered there for shelter. The Pied-   
montese host pressed up the acclivity, discharging a   
shower of arrows as they advanced, and the Waldensian   
line on which these missiles fell, seemed to waver,   
and to be on the point of giving way. Those behind,   
espying the danger, fell on their knees and, extending   
their hands in supplication to the God of battles, cried   
aloud, "O God of our fathers, help us I O God, deliver   
us!" That cry was heard by the attacking host, and   
especially by one of its captains, Le Noir of Mondovi,   
or the Black Mondovi, a proud, bigoted, bloodthirsty   
man. He instantly shouted out that his soldiers would   
give the answer, accompanying his threat with horrible   
blasphemies. The Black Mondovi raised his visor as he   
spoke. At the instant an arrow from the bow of Pierre   
Revel, of Angrogna, entering between his eyes, trans-   
fixed his skull, and he fell on the earth a corpse. The   
fall of this daring leader disheartened the Papal army.   
The soldiers began to fall back. They were chased   
down the slopes by the Vaudois, who now descended   
upon them like one of their own mountain torrents.   
Having driven then invaders to the plain, cutting ofE   
not a few in their flight, they returned as the evening   
began to fall, to celebrate with songs, on the heights   
where they had won it, the victory with which it had   
pleased the God of their fathers to crown their arms.   
 Cataneo burned with rage and shame at being de-   
feated by these herdsmen. In a few days, reassembling   
his host, he made a second attempt to enter the Angrogna.   
This promised to be successful. He passed the height   
of Roeomaneot, where he had encountered his first defeat,

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without meeting any resistance. He led his soldiers   
into the narrow defiles beyond. Here great rocks over-   
hang the path : mighty chestnut-trees fling their branches   
across the way, veiling it in gloom, and far down thun-   
ders the torrent that waters the valley. Still advancing,   
he found himself, without fighting, in possession of the   
ample and fruitful expanse into which, these defiles   
passed, the valley opens. He was now master so far of   
the Val di Angrogna, comprehending the numerous   
hamlets, with their finely cultivated fields and vineyards,   
on the left of the torrent. But he had seen none of   
the inhabitants. These, he knew, were with the men   
of Lucerna in the Pra del Tor. Between him and   
his prey rose the "Barricade," a steep unscaleable   
mountain, which runs like a wall across the valley,   
and forms a rampart to the famous "Meadow,'' which   
combines the solemnity of sanctuary with the strength   
of citadel.   
 Must the advance of the Papal legate and his army   
here end? It seemed as if it must. Cataneo was in a   
vast cul-de-sac. He could see the white peaks round   
the Pra, but between him and the Pra itself rose, in   
Cyclopean strength and height, the Barricade. He   
searched and, unhappily for himself, found an entrance.   
Some convulsion of nature has here rent the mountains,   
and through the long, narrow, and dark chasm thus   
formed lies the one only path that leads to the head of   
Angrogna. The leader of the Papal host boldly ordered   
his men to enter and traverse this frightful gorge, not   
knowing how few of them he should ever lead back.   
The only pathway through this chasm is a rocky ledge   
on the side of the mountain, so narrow that not more   
than two abreast can advance along it. If assailed   
either in front, or in rear, or from above, there is   
absolutely no retreat. Nor is there room for the party   
attacked to fight. The pathway is hung midway be-   
tween the bottom of the gorge, along which rolls the

THE LEGATE'S SOLDIERS IN THE MOUNTAIN GORGE. 47   
  
stream, and the summit of the mountain. Here the   
naked cliff runs sheer up for at least one thousand feet;   
there it leans over the path in stupendous masses, which   
look as if about to fall. Here lateral fissures admit the   
golden beams of the sun, which relieve the darkness of   
the pass, and make it visible. There a half -acre or so of   
level space gives standing-room on the mountain's side   
to a clump of birches, with their tall silvery trunks, or   
a chalet, with its bit of bright close-shaven meadow.   
But these only partially relieve the terrors of the chasm,   
which runs on from one to two miles, when, with a   
burst of light, and a sudden flashing of white peaks on   
the eye, it opens into an amphitheatre of meadow of   
dimensions so goodly, that an entire nation might find   
room to encamp in it.   
 It was into this terrible defile that the soldiers of the   
Papal legate now marched. They kept advancing, as   
best they could, along the narrow ledge. They were   
now nearing the Pra. It seemed impossible for their   
prey to escape them. Assembled on this spot the Wal-   
densian people had but one neck, and the Papal soldiers,   
so Cataneo believed, were to sever that neck at a blow.   
But God was watching over the Vaudois. He had   
said of the Papal legate and his army, as of another tyrant   
of former days, "I will put my hook in thy nose, and   
my bridle in thy lips, and I will cause thee to return by   
the way by which thou earnest." But by what agency   
was the advance of that host to be stayed? Will some   
mighty angel smite Cataneo' s army, as he did Sen-   
nacherib's? No angel blockaded the pass. Will   
thunder-bolts and hailstones be rained upon Cataneo' s   
soldiers, as of old on Sisera's? The thunders slept;   
the hail fell not. Will earthquake and whirlwind dis-   
comfit them? No earthquake rocked the ground; no   
whirlwinds rent the mountains. The instrumentality   
now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction   
was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet

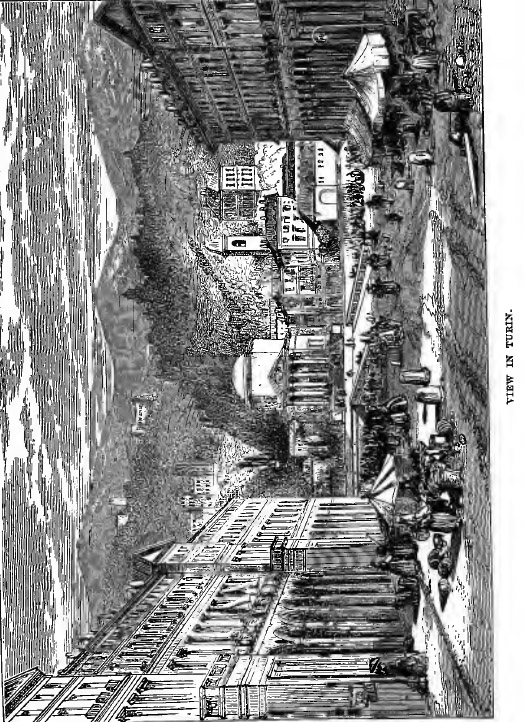
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no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the   
pass, and brought the march of the host to an instant   
halt.   
 A white cloud, no bigger than a man's hand., unob-   
served by the Piedmontese, but keenly watched by the   
Vaudois, was seen to gather on the mountain's summit,   
about the time the army would be entering the defile.   
That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. It began   
to descend. It came rolling down the mountain's side,   
wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven — a   
sea of murky vapour. It fell right into the chasm in   
which was the Papal army, sealing it up, and fining it   
from top to bottom with a thick black fog. In a   
moment the host were in night ; they were bewildered,   
stupefied, and could see neither before nor behind, could   
neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state   
bordering on terror.\*   
 The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of   
Providence in their behalf. It had given them the   
power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of   
the Pra, and issuing from all their hiding-places in its   
environs, they spread themselves over the mountains,   
the paths of which were familiar to them, and while the   
host stood riveted beneath them, caught in the double   
toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up huge   
stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into   
the ravine. The Papal soldiers were crushed where   
they stood. Nor was this all. Some of the Waldenses   
boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked   
them in front. Consternation seized the Piedmontese   
host. Panic impelled them to flee, but their effort to   
escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois, or   
the rocks that, swift as arrow, came bounding down the   
mountain. They jostled one another ; they threw each   
other down in the struggle; some were trodden to   
death; others were rolled over the precipice, and crushed   
  
\* Monastier, pp. 133-4.

THE GULF OF SAQUET. 49   
  
on the rocks below, or drowned in the torrent, and so   
perished miserably.\*   
 The fate of one of these invaders has been preserved   
in story. He was a certain Captain Saquet, a man, it   
is said, of gigantic stature, from Polonghera, in Pied-   
mont. He began, like his Philistine prototype, to vent   
curses on the Waldensian dogs. The words were yet in   
his mouth when his foot slipped. Rolling over the   
precipice, and tumbling into the torrent of the Angrogna,   
he was carried away by the stream, and his body finally   
deposited in a deep eddy or whirlpool, called in the   
patois of the country a "tompie,'' from the noise made   
by its waters. It bears to this day the name of the   
Tompie de Saquet, or Gulf of Saquet.§   
 This war hung above the Valleys, like a cloud of   
tempest, for a whole year. It inflicted much suffering   
and loss upon the Waldenses; their homes were burned,   
their fields devastated, their goods carried off, and their   
persons slain; but the invaders suffered heavier losses   
than they inflicted. Of the 18,000 regular troops, to   
which we may add about an equal number of despera-   
does, with which the campaign opened, few ever returned   
to their homes. They left their bones on the mountains   
they had come to subdue. They were cut off mostly in   
detail. They were led weary chases from valley to   
mountain and from mountain to valley. The rocks   
  
\* Monastier, p. 134.   
§ The Author was shown this pool when he visited the chasm.   
None of the "Waldensian valleys is hetter illustrated hy the sad,   
yet glorious, scenes of their martyrdom than this Valley of An-   
grogna. Every rock in it has its story. As you pass through it   
you are shown the spot where young children were dashed against   
the stones — the spot where men and women, stripped naked, were   
rolled up as balls, and precipitated down the mountain, and where,   
caught ty the stump of tree, or projecting angle of rock, they hung   
transfixed, enduring for days the agony of a living death. You are   
shown the entrance of caves, into which some hundreds of the   
Vaudois having fled, their enemies, lighting a fire at the mouth of   
their hiding place, ruthlessly killed them all. Time would fail to tell   
even a tithe of what has been done and suffered in thia famous pass.   
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rolled upon them gave them at once death and burial.   
They were met in narrow defiles and cut to pieces.   
Flying parties of "Waldenses would suddenly issue from   
the mist, or from some cave known only to themselves,   
attack and discomfit the foe, and then as suddenly   
retreat into the friendly vapour or the sheltering rock.   
Thus it came to pass that, in the words of Muston,   
"this army of invaders vanished from the Vaudois   
mountains as rain in the sands of the desert."\*   
 "God," says Leger, "turned the heart of their   
prince toward this poor people." He sent a prelate to   
their Valleys, to assure them of his good-will, and to   
intimate his wish to receive their deputies. They sent   
twelve of their more venerable men to Turin, who being   
admitted into the duke's presence, gave him such an   
account of their faith, that he candidly confessed that   
he had been misled in what he had done against them,   
and would not again suffer such wrongs to be inflicted   
upon them. He several times said that he " had not so   
virtuous, so faithful, and so obedient subjects as the   
Vaudois."§   
 He caused the deputies a little surprise by expressing   
a wish to see some of the Vaudois children. Twelve   
infants, with their mothers, were straightway sent for   
from the valley of Angrogna, and presented before the   
prince. He examined them narrowly. He found them   
well formed, and testified his admiration of their healthy   
faces, clear eyes and lively prattle. He had been told,   
he said, that "the Vaudois children were monsters,   
with only one eye placed in the middle of the fore-   
head, four rows of black teeth, and other similar   
deformities."₸   
 The prince, Charles II., a youth of only twenty,   
years, but humane and wise, confirmed the privileges   
  
\* Muston, p. 11.   
§ Leger, livr. ii., p. 26.   
₸ *Ibid*.   
  
A BRIEF RESPITE EROM PERSECUTION. 51   
  
and immunities of the Vaudois, and dismissed them   
with his promise that they should he unmolested in the   
future.\* The Churches of the Valleys now enjoyed a   
short respite from persecution.   
  
\* Leger and Grilles say that it was Philip VII. who put an   
end to this war. Monastier says they " are mistaken, for this prince   
was then in France, and did not begin to reign till 1496." This   
peace was granted in 1489.

CHAPTER VI.   
  
 SYNOD IN THE WALDENSIAN VALLEYS.   
  
The Old Vine seems Dying— New Life— The Reformation— Tidings Reach   
 the Waldenses— They Send Deputies into Germany and Switzerland   
 to Inquire— Joy of QScolampadius— His Admonitory Letter— Walden-   
 sian Deputies at Strasburg— The Two Churches a Wonder to each   
 other— Martyrdom of One of the Deputies, Resolution to Call a Synod   
 in the Valleys— Its Catholic Character— Spot where it Met— Confession   
 of Faith framed— The Spirit of the Vaudois Revives— They Rebuild   
 their Churches, &c. — Journey of Farel and Saunier to the Synod.

The Duke of Savoy was sincere in the promise that   
the Vaudois should not be disturbed, but fully to make   
it good was not altogether in his power. He could take   
care that such armies of crusaders as that which mus-   
tered under the standard of Cataneo should not invade   
their Valleys, but he could not guard them from the   
secret machinations of the priesthood. In the absence   
of the armed crusader, the missionary and the inquisitor   
assailed them. Some where seduced, others were kid-   
napped, and carried off to the Holy Office. To these   
annoyances was added the yet greater evil of a decaying   
piety. A desire for repose made many conform out-   
wardly to the Romish Church. " In order to be shielded   
from all interruption in their journeys on business, they   
obtained from the priests, who were settled in the   
Valleys, certificates or testimonials of their being   
Papists."\* To obtain this credential it was necessary   
to attend the Romish chapel, to confess, to go to mass,   
and to have their children baptised by the priests. For   
this shameful and criminal dissimulation they fancied they   
  
\* Monastier, *Hist, of the Vaudois*, p. 138.



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made amends by muttering to themselves when they   
entered the Romish temples, "Cave of robbers, may   
God confound thee!"\* At the same time they continued   
to attend the preaching of the Vaudois pastors, and to   
submit themselves to their censures. But beyond all   
question the men who practised these deceits, and the   
Church that tolerated them, had greatly declined. Tbat   
old vine seemed to be dying. A little while and it   
would disappear from off those mountains which it had   
so long covered with the shadow of its boughs.   
 But He who had planted it "looked down from   
heaven and visited it." It was now that the Reforma-   
tion broke out. The river of the Water of Life was   
opened a second time, and began to flow through   
Christendom. The old and dying stock in the Alps,   
drinking of the celestial stream, lived anew; its boughs   
began to be covered with blossoms and fruit as of old.   
 The Reformation had begun its career, and had   
already stirred most of the countries of Europe to their   
depths before tidings of the mighty change reached these   
secluded mountains. When at last the great news was   
announced, the Vaudois "were as men who dreamed."   
Eager to have them confirmed, and to know to what   
extent the yoke of Rome had been cast off by the   
nations of Europe, they sent forth Pastor Martin, of   
the valley of Lucerna, on a mission of inquiry. In   
1526 he returned with the amazing intelligence that   
the light of the old Evangel had broken on Ger-   
many, on Switzerland, on France, and that every day   
was adding to the number of those who openly professed   
the same doctrines to which the Vaudois had borne   
witness from ancient times. To attest what he said, he   
produced the books he had received in Germany contain-   
ing the views of the Reformers.§   
 The remnant of the Vaudois on the north of the   
  
\* Monaatier, Sist. of the Vaudois, p. 138.   
§ Gilles, p. 30, Monastier, p. 141.

OECOLAMPADIUS AND THE CHUKCHES OP PKOVENCE. 55   
  
Alps also sent out men to collect information respecting   
that great spiritual revolution which, had so surprised   
and gladdened them. In 1530 the Churches of Pro-   
vence and Dauphine commissioned George Morel, of   
Merindol, and Pierre Masson, of Bergundy, to visit the   
Reformers of Switzerland and Germany, and hring   
them word touching their doctrine and manner of life.   
The deputies met in conference with the members of the   
Protestant Churches of Neuchatel, Morat, and Bern.   
They had also interviews with Berthold Haller and   
William Farel. Going on to Basle they presented to   
CEcolampadius, in October, 1530, a document in Latin,   
containing a complete account of their ecclesiastical   
discipline, worship, doctrine, and manners. They begged   
in return that CEcolampadius would say whether he   
approved of the order and doctrine of their Church, and   
if he held it to be defective, to specify in what points,   
and to what extent. The elder Church submitted itself   
to the younger.   
 The visit of these two pastors of this ancient   
Church gave unspeakable joy to the Reformer of Basle.   
He heard in them the voice of the primitive and apostolic   
Church speaking to the Christians of the sixteenth   
century, and bidding them welcome within the gates of   
the City of God. "What a miracle was before him!   
For ages had this Church been in the fires, yet she had   
not been consumed. Was not this encouragement to   
those who were just entering into persecutions not less   
terrific? "We render thanks," said OEcolampadius in   
his letter, October 13th, 1530, to the Churches of   
Provence, "to our most gracious Father that he has   
called you into such marvellous light, during ages in   
which such thick darkness has. covered almost the whole   
world under the empire of Antichrist. We love you as   
brethren."   
 But his affection for them did not blind him to their   
declensions, nor make him withhold those admonitions

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which he saw to be needed. “As we approve of many   
things among you,” he wrote, "so there are several   
which we wish to see amended. We are informed that   
the fear of persecution has caused you to dissemble and   
to conceal your faith . . . There is no concord   
between Christ and Belial. You commune with un-   
believers; you take part in their abominable masses, in   
which the death and passion of Christ are blasphemed.   
. . . I know your weakness, but it becomes those   
who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ to be   
more courageous. It is better for us to die than to be   
overcome by temptation." It was thus that OEcolam-   
padius, speaking in the name of the Church of the   
Reformation, repaid the Church of the Alps for the   
services she had rendered to the world in former ages.   
By sharp, faithful, brotherly rebuke, he sought to   
restore to her the purity and glory which she had lost.   
 Having finished with OEcolampadius, the deputies   
went on to Strasburg. There they had interviews with   
Bucer and Capito. A similar statement of their faith   
to the Reformers of that city drew forth similar   
congratulations and counsels. In the clear light of her   
morning the Reformation Church saw many things   
which had grown dim in the evening of the Vaudois   
Church; and the Reformers willingly permitted their   
elder sister the benefit of their own wider views. If   
the men of the sixteenth century recognised the voice of   
primitive Christianity speaking in the Vaudois, the   
latter heard the voice of the Bible, or rather of God   
himself, speaking in the Reformers, and submitted   
themselves with modesty and docility to their reproofs.   
The last had become first.   
 A manifold interest belongs to the meeting of these   
two Churches. Each is a miracle to the other. The   
preservation of the Vaudois Church for so many ages,   
amid the fires of persecution, made her a wonder to the   
Church of the sixteenth century. The bringing up of

THE VAUDOIS AND REFORMED CHURCHES. 57   
  
the latter from the dead made her a yet greater wonder   
to the Church of the first century. These two Churches   
compare their respective beliefs: they find that their   
creeds are not twain, but one. They compare the   
sources of their knowledge: they find that they have   
both of them drawn their doctrine from the Word of   
God; they are not two Churches, they are one. They   
are the elder and younger members of the same glori-   
ous family, the children of the same Father. What   
a magnificent monument of the true antiquity and   
genuine catholicity of Protestantism!   
 Only one of the two Provence deputies returned   
from their visit to the Reformers of Switzerland. On   
their way back, at Dijon, suspicion, from some cause or   
other, fell on Pierre Masson. He was thrown into   
prison, and ultimately condemned and burned. His   
fellow-deputy was allowed to go on his way. George   
Morel, bearing the answers of the Reformers, and   
especially the letters of OEcolampadius, happily arrived   
in safety in Provence.   
 The documents he brought with him were much   
canvassed. Their contents caused these two ancient   
Churches mingled joy and sorrow; the former, however,   
greatly predominating. The news touching the numer-   
ous body of Christians, now appearing in many lands,   
so full of knowledge, and faith, and courage, was literally   
astounding. The confessors of the Alps thought that they   
were alone in the world; every successive century saw   
their numbers thinning, and their spirit growing less   
resolute; their ancient enemy, on the other hand, was   
steadfastly widening her dominion and strengthening   
her sway. A little longer, they imagined, and all   
public faithful profession of the Gospel would cease. It   
was at that moment they were told that a new army of   
champions had arisen to maintain the old battle. This   
announcement explained and justified the past to them,   
for now they beheld the fruits of their fathers' blood.

58 THE WALDENSES.   
  
They who had fought the battle were not to have the   
honour of the victory. That was reserved for comba-   
tants who had newly come into the field. They had   
forfeited this reward, they painfully felt, by their   
defections; hence the regret that mingled with their joy.   
 They proceeded to discuss the answers that should be   
made to the Churches of the Protestant faith, consider-   
ing especially whether they should adopt the reforms   
urged upon them in the communications which their   
deputies had brought back from the Swiss and German   
Reformers. The great majority of the Vaudois barbes   
were of opinion that they ought. A small minority,   
however, were opposed to this, because they thought   
that it did not become the new disciples to dictate to   
the old, or because they themselves were secretly   
inclined to the Roman superstitions. They went back   
again to the Reformers for advice; and, after repeated   
interchange of views, it was finally resolved to convene   
a synod in the Valleys, at which all the questions   
between the two Churches might be debated, and the   
relations which they were to sustain towards each other   
in time to come, determined. If the Church of the   
Alps was to continue apart, as before the Reformation,   
she felt that she must justify her position by proving   
the existence of great and substantial differences in   
doctrine between herself and the newly-arisen Church.   
But if no such differences existed, she would not, and   
dared not, remain separate and alone; she must unite   
with the Church of the Reformation.   
 It was resolved that the coming synod should be a   
truly oecumenical one — a general assembly of all the   
children of the Protestant faith. A hearty invitation   
was sent forth, and it was cordially and generally   
responded to. All the Waldensian Churches in the   
bosom of the Alps were represented in this synod. The   
Albigensiau communities on the north of the chain, and   
the Vaudois Churches in Calabria, sent deputies to it.   
  
 THE SYNOD OF CHAMFORANS. 59

The Churches of French Switzerland chose William   
Farel and Anthony Saunier to attend it.\* From even   
more distant lands, as Bohemia, came men to deliberate   
and vote in this famous convention.   
 The representatives assembled on the 12th of   
October, 1532. Two years earlier the Augsburg Con-   
fession had been given to the world, marking the   
culmination of the German Reformation. A year   
before, Zwingle had died on the field of Cappel. In   
France, the Reformation was beginning to be illustrated   
by the heroic deaths of its children. Calvin had not   
taken his prominent place at Geneva, but he was already   
enrolled under the Protestant banner. The princes of   
the Schmalkald League were standing at bay in the   
presence of Charles V. It was a critical yet glorious   
era in the annals of Protestantism which saw this   
assembly convened. It met at the town of Chamforans,   
in the heart of the Valley of Angrogna. There are   
few grander or stronger positions in all that valley than   
the site occupied by this little town. The approach to   
it was defended by the heights of Roeomaneot and La   
Serre, and by defiles which now contract, now widen,   
but are everywhere overhung by great rocks and mighty   
chestnut trees, behind and above which rise the taller   
peaks, some of them snow-clad. A little beyond La   
Serre is the plateau on which the town stood, over-   
looking the grassy bosom of the valley, which is   
watered by the crystal torrent, dotted by numerous   
chalets, and runs on for about two miles, till shut in by   
the steep, naked precipices of the Barricade, which,   
stretching from side to side of Angrogna, leaves only   
the long, dark chasm we have already described, as the   
pathway to the Pra del Tor, whose majestic mountains   
here rise on the sight and suggest to the traveller the   
idea that he is drawing nigh some city of celestial   
magnificence. The town of Chamforans does not now   
  
\* Ruchat, tom. iii., pp. 176, 657.

60 THE WALDENSES.   
  
exist; its only representative at this day is a solitary   
farmhouse.   
 The synod sat for six consecutive days. All the   
points raised in the communications received from the   
Protestant Churches were freely discussed by the   
assembled barbes and elders. Their findings were em-   
bodied in a "Short Confession of Faith,” which   
Monastier says "may be considered as a supplement to   
the ancient Confession of Faith of the year 1120, which   
it does not contradict in any point."\* It consists of   
seventeen articles, f the chief of which are the Moral   
inability of man; election to eternal life; the will of   
God, as made known in the Bible, the only rule of duty;   
and the doctrine of two Sacraments only, Baptism and   
the Lord's Supper.   
 The lamp which had been on the point of expiring   
began, after this synod, to burn with its former bright-   
ness. The ancient spirit of the Waldenses revived.   
They no longer practised those dissimulations and   
cowardly concealments to which they had had recourse   
to avoid persecution. They no longer feared to confess   
their faith. Henceforward they were never seen at   
mass, or in the Popish churches. They refused to   
recognise the priests of Rome as ministers of Christ,   
and under no circumstances would they receive any   
spiritual benefit or service at their hands.   
 Another sign of the new life that now animated the   
Vaudois was their setting about the work of rebuilding   
their churches. For fifty years before, public worship   
may be said to have ceased in their Valleys. Their   
churches had been razed by the persecutor, and the   
Vaudois feared to rebuild them lest they should draw   
  
\* Mist, of the Vaud., p. 146.   
§ It is entitled, says Leger, "A Brief Confession of Faith made by   
the Pastors and Meads of Families of the Valleys of Piedmont." "It is   
preserved," he adds, "with other documents, in the Library of the   
University of Cambridge." (Mist, des Vaud., livr. i., p. 95,)

VAUDOIS GIFT TO THE REFORMED CHURCHES. 61

down upon themselves a new storm of violence and   
blood. A cave would serve at times as a place of   
meeting. In more peaceful years the house of their   
barbe, or of some of their chief men, would be converted   
into a church; and when the weather was fine, they   
would assemble on the mountain side, under the great   
boughs of their ancestral trees. But their old sanctu-   
aries they dared not raise from the ruins into which the   
persecutor had cast them. They might say with the   
ancient Jews, "The holy and beautiful house in which   
our fathers praised Thee is burned with fire, and all our   
pleasant things are laid waste." But now, strengthened   
by the fellowship and counsels of their Protestant   
brethren, churches arose, and the worship of God was   
reinstituted. Hard by the place where the synod met,   
at Lorenzo, namely, was the first of these post-Refor-   
mation churches set up; others speedily followed in the   
other valleys; pastors were multiplied; crowds flocked   
to their preaching, and not a few came from the plains   
of Piedmont, and from remote parts of their valleys, to   
drink of these living waters again flowing in their land.   
 Yet another token did this old Church give of the   
vigorous life that was now flowing in her veins. This   
was a translation of the Scriptures into the French   
tongue. At the synod, the resolution was taken to   
translate and print both the Old and New Testaments,   
and, as this was to be done at the sole charge of the   
Vaudois, it was considered as their gift to the Churches   
of the Reformation. A most appropriate and noble gift!   
That Book which the Waldenses had received from the   
primitive Church — which their fathers had preserved   
with their blood — which their barbes had laboriously   
transcribed and circulated — they now put into the hands   
of the Reformers, constituting them along with them-   
selves the custodians of this, the ark of the world's   
hopes. Robert Olivetan, a near relative of Calvin, was   
asked to undertake the translation, and he executed it

62 THE WALDENSES.   
  
with the help of his great kinsman, it is believed. It   
was printed in folio, in black letter, at Neuchatel, in the   
year 1535, by Pierre de Wingle, commonly called   
Picard. The entire expense was defrayed by the Wal-   
denses, who collected for this object 1,500 crowns of   
gold, a large sum for so poor a people. Thus did the   
Waldensian Church emphatically proclaim, at the com-   
mencement of this new era in her existence, that the   
Word of God was her one sole foundation.   
 As has been already mentioned, a commission to   
attend the synod had been given by the Churches of   
French Switzerland to Farel and Saunier. Its fulfil-   
ment necessarily involved great toil and peril. One   
crosses the Alps at this day so easily, that it is   
difficult to conceive the toil and danger that attended   
the journey then. The deputies could not take the   
ordinary tracks across the mountains for fear of pursuit;   
they were compelled to travel by unfrequented paths.   
The way often led by the edge of precipices and abysses,   
up steep and dangerous ascents, and across fields of   
frozen snow. Nor were their pursuers the only dangers   
they had to fear; they were exposed to death from the   
blinding drifts and tempests of the hills. Nevertheless,   
they arrived in safety in the Valleys, and added by their   
presence and their counsels to the dignity of this the   
first great ecclesiastical assembly of modern times. Of   
this we have a somewhat remarkable proof. Three   
years thereafter, a Vaudois, Jean Peyrel, of Angrogna,   
being cast into prison, deposed on his trial that "he had   
kept guard for the ministers who taught the good law,   
who were assembled in the town of Chamforans, in the   
centre of Angrogna; and that amongst others present   
there was one called Farel, who had a red beard, and a   
beautiful white horse; and two others acccompanied   
him, one of whom had a horse, almost black, and the   
other was very tall, and rather lame."\*   
  
\* Gilles, p. 40. Monastier, p. 146.

CHAPTER VII.   
  
  
 PERSECUTIONS AND MARTYRDOMS.

A Peace of Twenty-eight Years— Flourishing State — Bersour— A Martyr   
 — Martyrdom of Pastor Gonin— Martyrdoms of a Student and a Monk   
 — Trial and Burning of a Colporteur— A List of Horrible Deaths—   
 The Valleys under the Sway of France— Restored to Savoy—   
 — Emmanuel Philibert— Persecution Renewed— Carignano— Persecu-   
 tion Approaches the Mountains— Deputation to the Duke— The Old   
 Paths— Remonstrance to the Duke— to the Duchess— to the Council.

The Church of the Alps had peace for twenty-eight   
years. This was a time of great spiritual prosperity.   
Sanctuaries arose in all her Valleys; her pastors and   
teachers were found too few, and men of learning and   
zeal, some of them from foreign lands, pressed into her   
service. Individuals and families in the cities on the   
plain of Piedmont embraced her faith; and the crowds   
that attended her worship were continually growing.\*   
In short, this venerable Church had a second youth.   
Her lamp, retrimmed, burned with a brightness that   
justified her time-honoured motto, "A light shining in   
darkness." The darkness was not now so deep as it had   
been; the hours of night were drawing to a close. Nor   
was the Vaudois community the only light that now   
shone in Christendom. It was one of a constellation of   
lights, whose brilliance was beginning to irradiate the   
  
\* George Morel states, in his Memoirs, that at this time there   
were more than 800,000 persons of the religion of the Vaudois.   
(Leger, *Hist, des Vaudois*, livr. ii., p. 27.) He includes, of course, in   
this estimate the Vaudois in the Valleys, on the plain of Piedmont, in   
Naples and Calabria, in the South of France, and in the countries of   
Germany.

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skies of the Church with an effulgence which no former   
age had known.   
 The exemption from persecution, which the Wal-   
denses enjoyed during this period, was not absolute, but   
comparative. The lukewarm are seldom molested ; and   
the quickened zeal of the Vaudois brought with it a   
revival of the persecutor's malignity, though it did not   
find vent in violences so dreadful as the tempests that   
had lately smitten them. Only two years after the   
synod — that is, in 1534 — wholesale destruction fell   
upon the Vaudois Churches of Provence; but the sad   
story of their extinction will more appropriately be   
told elsewhere. In the valleys of Piedmont events were   
from time to time occurring that showed that the inquisi-   
tor's vengeance had been scotched, not killed. While   
the Vaudois as a race were prosperous, their churches   
multiplying, and their faith extending its geographical   
area from one year to another, individual Vaudois were   
being at times seized, and put to death, at the stake, on   
the rack, or by the cord.   
 Three years after, the persecution broke out anew,   
and raged for a short time. Charles III. of Savoy, a   
prince of mild manners, but under the rule of the   
priests, being solicited by the Archbishop of Turin and   
the inquisitor of the same city, gave his consent to   
"hunting down" the heretics of the Valleys. The   
commission was given to a nobleman of the name of   
Bersour, whose residence was at Pinerolo, near the   
entrance of the Valley of Perosa. Bersour, a man of   
savage disposition, collected a troop of 500 horse and   
foot, and attacked the Valley of Angrogna. He was   
repulsed, but the storm which had rolled away from   
the mountains fell upon the plains. Turning to the   
Vaudois who resided around his own residence, he seized   
a great number of persons, whom he threw into the   
prisons and convents of Pinerolo and the Inquisition of   
Turin. Many of them suffered in the flames. One of   
  
 A PARABLE AT THE STAKE. 65   
  
these martyrs, Catalan Girard, quaintly taught the   
spectators a parabolic lesson, standing at the pile. From   
amid the flames he asked for two stones, which were   
instantly brought him. The crowd looked on in silence,   
curious to know what he meant to do with them. Rub-   
bing them against each other, he said, "You think to   
extinguish our poor Churches by your persecutions.   
You can no more do so, than I with my feeble hands can   
crush these stones." \*   
 Heavier tempests seemed about to descend, when   
suddenly the sky cleared above the confessors of the   
Alps. It was a change in the politics of Europe in this   
instance, as in many others, that stayed the arm of   
persecution. Francis I. of France demanded of Charles,   
Duke of Savoy, permission to march an army through   
his dominions. The object of the French king was the   
recovery of the Duchy of Milan, a long-contested prize   
between himself and Charles V. The Duke of Savoy   
refused the request of his brother monarch ; but reflect-   
ing that the passes of the Alps were in the hands of the   
men whom he was persecuting, and that should he   
continue his oppressions, the Vaudois might open the   
gates of his kingdom to the enemy, he sent orders to   
Bersour to stop the persecution in the Valleys.   
 In 1536, the Waldensian Church had to mourn the   
loss of one of the more distinguished of her pastors.   
Martin Gonin, of Angrogna — a man of public spirit   
and rare gifts — who had gone to Geneva on ecclesias-   
tical affairs, was returning through Dauphine, when he   
was apprehended on suspicion of being a spy. He   
cleared himself of that charge, but the gaoler searching   
his person, and discovering certain papers upon him, he   
was convicted of what the Parliament of Grenoble   
accounted a much greater crime — heresy. Condemned   
to die, he was led forth at night, and drowned in the   
river Isere. He would have suffered at the stake had   
  
 \* Leger, livr. ii., p. 27.

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not his persecutors feared the effect of his dying words   
upon the spectators.\*   
 There were others, also called to ascend the martyr-   
pile, whose names we must not pass over in silence.   
Two pastors returning from Geneva to their flocks in the   
Valleys, in company of three French Protestants, were   
seized at the Col de Tamiers, in Savoy, and carried to   
Chambery. There all five were tried, condemned, and   
burned. The fate of Nicolas Sartoire is yet more   
touching. He was a student of theology at Geneva,   
and held one of those bursaries which the Lords of   
Bern had allotted for the training of young men as   
pastors in the Churches of the Valleys. He set out to   
spend his holiday with his family in Piedmont. We   
know how Vaudois heart yearns for its native mountains;   
nor would the coming of the youth awaken less lively   
anticipations on the part of his friends. The paternal   
threshold, alas! he was never to cross; his native Valleys   
he was to tread no more. Travelling by the pass of St.   
Bernard, and the grand valley of Aosta, he had just   
passed the Italian frontier, when he was apprehended on   
the suspicion of heresy. It was the month of May,   
when all was life and beauty in the vales and mountains   
around him; he himself was in the spring-time of   
existence; it was hard to lay down life at such a   
moment; but the great captain from whose feet he had   
just come, had taught him that the first duty of a   
soldier of Christ is obedience. He confessed his Lord,   
nor could promises or threats — and both were tried —   
make him waver. He continued steadfast unto the end,   
and on the 4th of May, 1557, he was brought forth   
from his dungeon at Aosta, and burned alive.§   
 The martyr who died thus heroically at Aosta was a   
youth, the one we are now to contemplate was a man of   
fifty. Geofroi Varaile was a native of the town of   
Busco, in Piedmont. His father had been a captain in   
  
\* Monastier, p. 153. § Leger, livr. ii., p. 29.

MARTYRDOM OP VARAILE. 67   
  
that army of murderers who, in 1488, ravaged the   
Valleys of Lucerna and Angrogna. The son in 1520   
became a monk, and possessing the gift of a rare   
eloquence, he was sent on a preaching tour, in company   
with another cowled ecclesiastic, yet more famous, Ber-   
nardo Ochino of Sienna, the founder of the order of the   
Capuchins. The arguments of the men he was sent to   
convert staggered Varaile. He fled to Geneva, and in   
the city of the Reformers he was taught more fully the   
"way of life." Ordained as a pastor, he returned to   
the Valleys, where "like another Paul, says Leger, "he   
preached the faith he once destroyed." After a ministry   
of some months, he set out to pay a visit of a few days   
to his native town of Busco. He was apprehended by   
the monks who were lying in wait for him. He was   
condemned to death by the Inquisition of Turin. His   
execution took place in the castle-piazza of the same   
city, March 29th, 1558. He walked to the place where   
he was to die with a firm step and a serene countenance;   
he addressed the vast multitude around his pile in a way   
that drew tears from many eyes; after this, he began to   
sing with a loud voice, and so continued till he sank   
amid the flames.\*   
 Two years before this, the same piazza, the castle-   
yard at Turin, had witnessed a similar spectacle. Bar-   
thelemy Hector was a bookseller in Poictiers. A man of   
warm but well-tempered zeal, he travelled as far as the   
Valleys, diffusing that knowledge that maketh wise   
unto salvation. In the assemblage of white peaks that   
look down on the Pra del Tor is one named La Vechera,   
so called because the cows love the rich grass that clothes   
its sides in summer-time. Barthelemy Hector would   
take his seat on the slopes of the mountain, and gather-   
ing the herdsmen and agriculturists of the Pra round   
him, would induce them to buy his books, by reading   
passages to them. Portions of the Scriptures also   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 29. Monastier, p. 168.

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would he recite to the grandames and maidens as they   
watched their goats, or plied the distaff. His steps were   
tracked by the inquisitor, even amid these wild solitudes.   
He was dragged to Turin, to answer for the crime of   
selling Genevese books. His defence before his judges   
discovered an admirable courage and wisdom.   
 "You have been caught in the act,'" said his judge,   
"of selling books that contain heresy. What say you? "   
 "If the Bible is heresy to you, it is truth to me,"   
replied the prisoner.   
 "But you use the Bible to deter men from going to   
mass," urged the judge.   
 "If the Bible deters men from going to mass,"   
responded Barthelemy, "it is a proof that God dis-   
approves of it, and that the mass is idolatry."   
 The judge, deeming it expedient to make short   
shrift with such' a heretic, exclaimed, " Retract."   
 "I have spoken only truth," said the bookseller,   
"can I change truth as I would a garment?"   
 His judges kept him some months in prison, in the   
hope that his recantation would save them the necessity   
of burning him. This unwillingness to have resort to   
the last penalty was owing to no feeling of pity for the   
prisoner, but entirely to the conviction that these   
repeated executions were endangering the cause of their   
Church. "The smoke of these martyr-piles," as was   
said with reference to the death of Patrick Hamilton,   
"was infecting those on whom it blew." But the   
constancy of Barthelemy compelled his persecutors to   
disregard these prudential considerations. At last,   
despairing of his abjuration, they brought him forth and   
consigned him to the flames. His behaviour at the   
stake "drew rivers of tears," says Leger, "from the eyes   
of many in the Popish crowd around his stake, while   
others vented reproaches and invectives against the   
cruelty of the monks and the inquisitors.\*   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 28.   
  
SURRERINGS OF VAULDOIS CONFESSORS. 69   
  
These are only a few of the many martyrs by whom,   
even during this period of comparative peace and pros-   
perity, the Church of the Valleys was called to testify   
against Rome. Some of these martyrs perished by cruel,   
barbarous, and most horrible methods. To recite all   
these cases would be beyond our purpose, and to depict   
the revolting and infamous details would be to narrate   
what no reader could peruse. We shall quote only part   
of the brief summary of Muston. "There is no town   
in Piedmont," says he, "under a Vaudois pastor, where   
some of our brethren have not been put to death . . .   
Hugo Chiamps of Fiuestrelle had his entrails torn from   
his living body, at Turin. Peter Geymarali of Bobbio,   
in like manner, had his entrails taken out at Lucerna,   
and a fierce cat thrust in their place to torture him   
further; Maria Romano was buried alive at Rocco-patia;   
Magdalen Foulano underwent the same fate at San   
Giovanni; Susan Michelini was bound hand and foot, and   
left to perish of cold and hunger at Saracena. Bartho-   
lomew Fache, gashed with sabres, had the wounds filled   
up with quicklime, and perished thus in agony at Fenile;   
Daniel Michelini had his tongue torn out at Bobbio for   
having praised God. James Baridari perished covered   
with sulphurous matches, which had been forced into his   
flesh under the nails, between the fingers, in the nostrils,   
in the lips, and over all his body, and then lighted.   
Daniel Revelli had his mouth filled with gunpowder,   
which, being lighted, blew his head to pieces. Maria   
Monnen, taken at Liousa, had the flesh cut from her   
cheek and chin bone, so that her jaw was left bare, and   
she was thus left to perish. Paul Gamier was slowly   
sliced to pieces at Rora. Thomas Margueti was mutila-   
ted in an indescribable manner at Miraboco, and Susan   
Jaquin cut in bits at La Torre. Sara Rostagnol was slit   
open from the legs to the bosom, and so left to perish on   
the road between Eyral and Lucerna. Anne Charbonnier   
was impaled and carried thus on a pike, as a standard.

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from San Giovanni to La Torre. Daniel Rambaud, at   
Paesano, had his nails torn off, then his fingers chopped   
off, then his feet and his hands, then his arms and his   
legs, with each successive refusal on his part to abjure   
the Gospel."\* Thus the roll of martyrs runs on, and   
with each new sufferer comes a new, a more excruciating   
and more horrible mode of torture and death.   
 We have already mentioned the demand which   
the King of France made upon the Duke of Savoy,   
Charles III., that he would permit him to march an   
army through his territories. The reply was a refusal; but   
Francis I. must needs have a road into Italy. Accord-   
ingly he seized upon Piedmont, and held possession of   
it, together with the Waldensian valleys, for twenty-   
three years. The Waldenses had found the sway of   
Francis I. more tolerant than that of their own princes;   
for though Francis hated Lutheranism, the necessities of   
his policy often compelled him to court the Lutherans,   
and so it came to pass that while he was burning heretics   
in Paris he spared them in the Valleys. But the general   
peace of Chateau Cambresis, April 3rd, 1559, restored   
Piedmont, with the exception of Turin, to its former   
rulers of the House of Savoy,§ Charles III. had been   
succeeded in 1553 by Emmanuel Philibert. Philibert   
was a prince of superior talents and humane disposition,   
and the Vaudois cherished the hope that under him they   
would be permitted to live in peace, and to worship as   
their fathers had done. What strengthened these just   
expectations was the fact that Philibert had married a   
sister of the King of France, Henry II., who had been   
carefully instructed in the Protestant faith by her illus-   
trious relations, Margaret, Queen of Navarre, and   
Renee of France, daughter of Louis XII. But, alas!   
the treaty that restored Emmanuel Philibert to the   
throne of his ancestors, contained a clause binding the   
contracting parties to extinguish heresy. This was to   
  
\* Muston, Israel of the Alps, chap. 8. § Leger, livr. ii., p. 29.

RENEWAL OF PERSECUTION. 71

send him back to his subjects with a dagger in his   
hand.   
 Whatever the ldng might incline — and, strengthened   
by the counsels of his Protestant queen, he would doubt-   
less, if he could, have dealt humanely by his faithful sub-   
jects, the Vaudois — his intentions were overborne by men   
of stronger wills and more determined resolves. The   
inquisitors of his kingdom, the nuncio of the Pope, and   
the ambassadors of Spain and France, united in urging   
upon him the purgation of his dominions, in terms of   
the agreement in the Treaty of Peace. The unhappy   
monarch, unable to resist these powerful solicitations,   
issued on the 15th February, 1560, an edict forbidding   
his subjects to hear the Protestant preachers in the   
Valley of Lucerna, or anywhere else, under pain of a   
fine of 100 dollars of gold for the first offence, and of   
the galleys for life for the second. This edict had refer-   
ence mainly to the Protestants on the plain of Piedmont,   
who resorted in crowds to hear sermon in the Valleys.   
There followed, however, in a short time, a yet severer edict,   
commanding attendance at mass under pain of death.   
To carry out this cruel decree, a commission was given   
to a prince of the blood, Philip of Savoy, Count de   
Eaconis, and with him was associated George Costa,   
Count de la Triuita, and Thomas Jacomel, the Inquisitor-   
General, a man as cruel in disposition as he was licen-   
tious in manners. To these was added a certain   
Councillor Corbis, but he was not of the stuff which the   
business required, and so, after witnessing a few initial   
scenes of barbarity and horror, he resigned his commis-   
sion.\*   
 The first burst of the tempest fell on Carignano.   
This town reposes sweetly on one of the spurs of the   
Apennines, about twenty miles to the south-west of   
Turin. It contained many Protestants, some of whom   
were of good position. The wealthiest were selected and

\* Monastier, chap. 19, p. 172. Muston, chap. 10., p. 52.

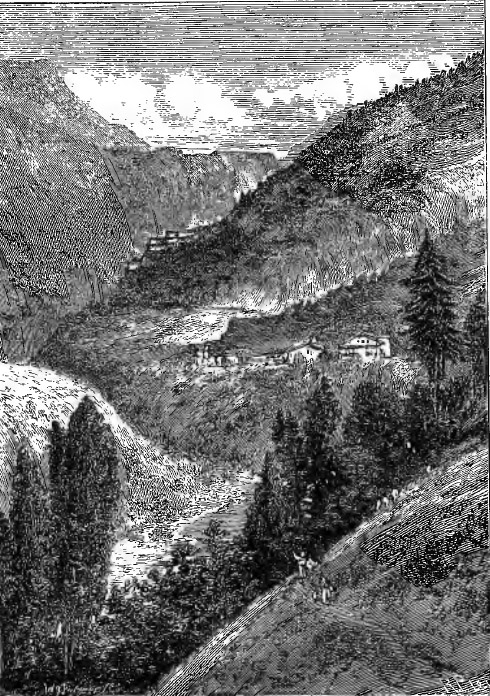
72 THE WALDENSES.   
  
dragged to the burning-pile, in order to strike terror into   
the rest. The blow had not fallen in vain; the profes-   
sors of the Protestant creed in Carignano were scattered;   
some fled to Turin, then under the domination of France,   
some to other places, and some, alas! frightened by the   
tempest in front, turned back and sought refuge in the   
darkness behind them. They had desired the "better coun-   
try,'' but could not enter in at the cost of exile and death.   
 Having done its work in Carignano, this desolating   
tempest held its way across the plain of Piedmont,   
towards those great mountains which were the ancient   
fortress of the truth, marking its track through the   
villages and country communes in terror, in pillage, and   
blood. It moved like one of those thunder-clouds which   
the traveller on the Alps may often descry beneath him,   
traversing the same plain, and shooting its lightnings   
earthwards as it advances. Wherever it was known   
that there was a Vaudois congregation, thither did the   
cloud turn. And now we behold it at the foot of the   
Waldensian Alps — at the entrance of the Valleys, within   
whose mighty natural bulwarks crowds of fugitives from   
the towns and villages on the plain have already found   
asylum.   
 Rumours of the confiscations, arrests, cruel tortures,   
and horrible deaths which had befallen the Churches at   
the foot of their mountains, had preceded the appearance   
of the crusaders at the entrance of the Valleys. The   
same devastation which had befallen the flourishing   
Churches on the plain of Piedmont, seemed to impend   
over the Churches in the bosom of the Alps. At this   
juncture the pastors and leading laymen assembled to   
deliberate on the steps to be taken. Having fasted and   
humbled themselves before God, they sought by earnest   
prayer the direction of his Holy Spirit.\* They resolved   
to approach the throne of their prince, and by humble   
remonstrance and petition, set forth the state of their   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 29.

THE "HUMBLE PETITION" OP THE VAUDOIS. 73   
  
affairs and the justice of their cause. Their first claim   
was to be heard before being condemned — a right   
denied to no one accused, however criminal. They next   
solemnly disclaimed the main offence laid to their charge,   
that of departing from the true faith, and of adopting   
doctrines unknown to the Scriptures, and the early ages   
of the Church. Their faith was that which Christ Him-   
self had taught; which the apostles, following their   
Great Master, had preached; which the Fathers had   
vindicated with their pens, and the martyrs with their   
blood, and which the first four Councils had ratified, and   
proclaimed to be the faith of the Christian world. Prom   
the "old paths," the Bible and all antiquity being   
witnesses, they had never turned aside; from father to   
son they had continued these 1,500 years to walk therein.   
Their mountains shielded no novelties; they had bowed   
the knee to no strange gods, and, if they were heretics,   
so too were the first four Councils; and so too were the   
apostles themselves. If they erred, it was in the com-   
pany of the confessors and martyrs of the early ages.   
They were willing any moment to appeal their cause to   
a General Council, provided that Council were willing to   
decide the question by the only infallible standard they   
knew, the Word of God. If on this evidence they   
should be convicted of even one heresy, most willingly   
would they surrender it. On this, the main point of   
their indictment, what more could they promise ? Show   
us, they said, what the errors are which you ask us to   
renounce under the penalty of death, and you shall not   
need to ask a second time.\*   
  
\* "First, we do protest before the Almighty and All-just God,   
before whose tribunal we must all one day appear, that we intend to   
live and die in the holy faith, piety, and religion of our Lord Jesns   
Christ, and that we do abhor all heresies that have been, and are,   
condemned by the Word of God. We do embrace the most holy   
doctrine of the prophets and apostles, as likewise of the Nicene and   
Athanasian Creeds; we do subscribe to the four Councils, and to all   
the ancient Fathers, in all such things as are not repugnant to the   
analogy of faith." (Leger, livr. ii., pp. 30 — 1.)   
74 THE WALDENSES.   
  
Their duty to God did not weaken their allegiance to   
their prince. To piety they added loyalty. The throne   
before which they now stood had not more faithful and   
devoted subjects than they. When had they plotted   
treason, or disputed lawful command of their sovereign?   
Nay, the more they feared God, the more they honoured   
the king. Their services, their substance, their life, were   
all at the disposal of their prince; they were willing to   
lay them all down in defence of his lawful prerogative;   
one thing only they could not surrender — their con-   
science.   
 As regarded their Romanist fellow-subjects of Pied-   
mont, they had lived in good-neighbourhood with them.   
Whose person had they injured — whose property had   
they robbed — whom had they over-reached in their bar-   
gains ? Had they not been kind, courteous, honest?   
If their hills had vied in fertility with the naturally   
richer plains at their feet, and if their mountain-homes   
had been filled with store of corn, and oil, and wine, not   
always found in Piedmontese dwellings, to what was   
this owing, save to their superior industry, frugality,   
and skill ? Never had marauding expedition descended   
from their hills to carry off the goods of their neigh-   
bours, or to inflict retaliation for the many murders   
and robberies to which they had had to submit. Why,   
then, should their neighbours rise against them to   
exterminate them, as if they were a horde of evil-   
doers, in whose neighbourhood no man could live in   
peace ; and why should their sovereign unsheathe the   
sword against those who had never been found dis-   
turbers of his kingdom, nor plotters against his govern-   
ment, but who, on the contrary, had ever striven to   
maintain the authority of his law, and the honour of his   
throne? "One thing is certain, most serene prince,  
they said, in conclusion," that the Word of God will   
not perish, but will abide for ever. If, then, our religion   
is the pure Word of God, as we are persuaded it is,

THE VAUDOIS APPEAL TO THE DUCHESS OF SAVOY. 75   
  
and not a human invention, no human power will be   
able to abolish it."\*   
 Never was there a more solemn, or a more just, or a   
more respectful remonstrance presented to any throne.   
The wrong about to be done them was enormous, yet not   
an angry word, nor a single accusatory sentence, do the   
Vaudois permit themselves to utter. But to what avail   
this solemn protest, this triumphant vindication? The   
more complete and conclusive it is, the more manifest   
does it make the immense injustice and the flagrant   
criminality of the House of Savoy. The more, the   
Vaudois put themselves in the right, the more they put   
the Church of Rome in the wrong ; and they who have   
already doomed them to perish are but the more reso-   
lutely determined to carry out their purpose.   
 This document was accompanied by two others: one   
to the queen, and one to the Council. The one to the   
queen is differently conceived from that to the duke.   
They offer no apology for their faith: the queen herself   
was of it. They allude in a few touching terms to the   
sufferings they had already been subjected to, and to   
the yet greater that appeared to impend. This was   
enough, they knew, to awaken all her sympathies, and   
enlist her as their advocate with the king, after the   
example of Esther, and other noble women in former   
times, who valued their lofty station less for its dazzling   
honours, than for the opportunities it gave them of   
shielding the persecuted confessors of the truth,§   
  
\* See in Leger (livr. ii., pp. 30—1) the petition of the Vaudois   
presented "Au Serenissime et tres-Puissant Prince, Philibert Em-   
manuel, Duo de Savoye, Prince de Piemont, notre tres-Clement   
Seigneur " (To the Serene and most Mighty Prince, Philibert Em-   
manuel, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont, our most Gracious Lord).   
§ See in Leger (livr. ii., p. 32), "A la tres-Vertueuse et tres-   
Excellente Dame, Madame Marguerite de France, Duchesse de Savoye   
et de Berry" — "the petition of her poor and humble subjects, the   
inhabitants of the Valleys of Lucerna and Angrogna, and Perosa and   
San Martino, and all those of the plain who call purely upon the   
name of the Lord Jesus."   
76 THE WALDENSES.   
  
The remonstrance presented to the Council was   
couched in terms more plain and direct, yet still re-   
spectful. They bade the counsellors of the king beware   
what they did; they warned them that every drop of   
innocent blood they should spill they would one day   
have to account for; that if the blood of Abel, though   
only that of one man, cried with a voice so loud that   
God heard it in heaven, and came down to call its   
shedder to a reckoning, how much mightier the cry that   
would arise from the blood of a whole nation, and how   
much more terrible the vengeance with which it would   
be visited I In fine, they reminded the Council that   
what they asked was not an unknown privilege in   
Piedmont, nor would they be the first or the only   
persons who had enjoyed that indulgence if it should be   
extended to them. Did not the Jew and the Saracen   
live unmolested in their cities? Did they not permit   
the Israelite to build his synagogue, and the Moor   
to read his Koran, without annoyance or restraint?   
Was it a great thing that the faith of the Bible should   
be placed on the same level in this respect with that of   
the Crescent, and that the descendants of the men who   
for generations had been the subjects of the House of   
Savoy, and who had enriched the dominions with their   
virtues, and defended them with their blood, should   
be treated with the same humanity that was shown to   
the alien and the unbeliever?   
 These petitions the confessors of the Alps dispatched   
to the proper quarter, and having done so, they waited   
an answer with eyes lifted up to heaven. If that   
answer should be peace, with what gratitude to God and   
to their prince would they hail it! should it be other-   
wise, they were ready to accept that alternative too;   
they were prepared to die.

CHAPTER VIII.   
  
 PREPARATIONS FOR A WAR OF EXTERMINATION.   
  
Pastor Gillea Carries the Remonstrance to the Duke— No Tidings for   
 Three Months— The Monks of Pinerolo begin the Persecution— Raid   
 in San Martino— Philip of Savoy's Attempt at Conciliation— A Monk's   
 Sermon —The Duke Declares War against the Vaudois— Dreadful   
 Character of his Army— The Waldenses hold a Fast, &c— Skirmishing   
 in Angrogna— Night Panic— La Trinita Occupies the Val di Lucerna—   
 An Intrigue— Fruitless Concessions— Affecting Incidents— La Trinita   
 Demands 20,000 Crowns from the Men of the Valleys— He Retires into   
 Winter Quarters— Outrages of his Soldiers.

Where was the Vaudois who would put his life in his   
hand, and carry this remonstrance to the Duke? The   
dangerous service was undertaken by M. Gilles, Pastor   
of Bricherasio, a devoted and courageous man. A com-   
panion was associated with him, but wearied out with   
the rebuffs and insults he met with, he abandoned the   
mission, and left its conduct to Grilles alone. The duke   
then lived at Nice, for Turin, his capital, was still in the   
hands of the French, and the length of the journey   
very considerably increased its risks. Gilles reached   
Nice in safety, however, and after many difficulties and   
delays he had an interview with Queen Margaret, who   
undertook to place the representations of which he was   
the bearer in the hands of her husband, the duke. The   
deputy had an interview also with Philip of Savoy, the   
duke's brother, and one of the commissioners under the   
Act for the purgation of the Valleys. The Waldensian   
pastor was, on the whole, well received by him. Un-   
equally yoked with the cruel and bigoted Count La   
Trinita, Philip of Savoy soon became disgusted, and left   
the bloody business wholly in the hands of his fellow-

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commissioner.\* As regarded the queen, her heart was   
in the Valleys; the cause of the poor Vaudois was her   
cause also. But she stood alone as their intercessor with   
the duke ; her voice was drowned by the solicitations   
and threats of the prelates, the King of Spain, and the   
Pope.§   
 For three months there came neither letter nor edict   
from the court at Nice. If the men of the Valleys were   
impatient to know the fate that awaited them, their   
enemies, athirst for plunder and blood, were still more   
so. The latter, unable longer to restrain their passions,   
began persecution on their own account. They thought   
they knew their sovereign's intentions, and made bold   
to anticipate them.   
 The tocsin was rung out from the Monastery of   
Pinerolo. Perched on the frontier of the Valleys, the   
monks of this establishment kept their eyes fixed upon   
the heretics of the mountains, as vultures watch their   
prey, ever ready to sweep down upon hamlet or valley   
when they found it unguarded. They hired a troop of   
marauders, whom they sent forth to pillage. The band   
returned, driving before them a wretched company of   
captives, whom they had dragged from their homes and   
vineyards in the mountains. The poorer sort they burnt   
alive, or sent to the galleys; the rich they imprisoned   
till they had paid the ransom to which they were held.₸   
 The example of the monks was followed by certain   
Popish landlords in the Valley of San Martino. The   
two seigneurs of Perrier attacked, before day-break of   
April 2nd, 1560, the villagers of Eioclareto, with an   
armed band. Some they slaughtered, the rest they drove   
out, without clothes or food, to perish on the snow-clad   
hills. The ruffians who had expelled them took posses-   
sion of their dwellings, protesting that no one should   
enter them unless he were willing to go to mass. They   
  
\* Muston, p. 68. § Muston, p. 72.   
₸ Muston, p. 69. Monastier, p. 178.   
  
  
 A SUGGESTED COMPROMISE. 79   
  
kept possession only three days, for the Protestants of the   
Valley of Clusone, to the number of 400, hearing of the   
outrage, crossed the mountains, drove out the invaders,   
and reinstated their brethren.\*   
 Next appeared in the Valleys, Philip of Savoy,   
Count de Raconis, and Chief Commissioner. He was an   
earnest Roman Catholic, but a humane and upright man.   
He attended sermon one day in the Protestant church of   
Angrogna, and was so much pleased with what he heard,   
that he obtained from the pastor an outline of the   
Vaudois faith, so as to send it to Rome, in the hope that   
the Pope would cease to persecute a creed that seemed so   
little heretical. A sanguine hope truly! Where the   
honest count had seen very little heresy, the Pope,   
Pius IV., saw a great deal; and would not even permit a   
disputation with the "Waldensian pastors, as the count   
had proposed. He would stretch his benignity no further   
than to absolve " from their past crimes " all who were   
willing to enter the Church of Rome. This was not   
very encouraging, still the count did not abandon his   
idea of conciliation. In June, 1560, he came a second   
time to the Valley of Lucerna, accompanied by his   
colleague, La Trinita, and assembling the pastors and   
heads of families, he told them that the persecution   
would cease immediately, provided they would consent   
to hear the preachers he had brought with him, *Brothers   
of the Christian Doctrine*. He further proposed that   
they should silence their own ministers while they were   
making trial of his. The Vaudois expressed their   
willingness to consent, provided the count's ministers   
preached the piire Gospel; but if they preached human   
traditions, they (the Vaudois) would be under the neces-   
sity of withholding their consent; and, as regarded   
silencing their own ministers, it was only reasonable that   
they should be permitted first to make trial of the count's   
preachers. A few days after, they had a taste of the   
  
\* Muston, p. 70. Monastier, pp. 176-7.   
80 THE WALDENSES.   
  
new expositors. Selecting the ablest among them, they   
made him ascend the pulpit, and hold forth to a Vaudois   
congregation. He took a very effectual way to make   
them listen. "I will demonstrate to you," said he,   
"that the mass is found in Scripture. The word massah   
signifies 'sent/ does it not?" "Not precisely,'' replied   
his hearers, who knew more about Hebrew than was   
convenient for the preacher. "The primitive expression,''   
continued he, "*Ite missa est*, was employed to dismiss the   
auditory, was it not?" "That is quite true," replied   
his hearers, without very clearly seeing how it bore on   
his argument. "Well, then, you see, gentlemen, that   
the mass is found in the Holy Scripture."\* The congre-   
gation were unable to determine whether the preacher   
was arguing with them, or simply laughing at them.   
 Finding the Waldenses obdurate, as he deemed them,   
the Duke of Savoy, in October, 1560, declared war   
against them. Early in that month a dreadful rumour   
reached the Valleys, namely, that the duke was levying   
an army to exterminate them. The news was but too   
true. The duke offered a free pardon to all "outlaws,   
convicts, and vagabonds "who would enrol as volunteers   
to serve against the Vaudois. Soon an army of a truly   
dreadful character was assembled. The Vaudois seemed   
doomed to total and inevitable destruction. The pastors   
and chief persons assembled to deliberate on the measures   
to be taken at this terrible crisis. Feeling that their   
refuge was in God alone, they resolved that they would   
take no means for deliverance which might be offensive   
to him, or dishonourable to themselves. The pastors   
were to exhort every one to apply to God, with true   
faith, sincere repentance, and ardent prayer; and as to   
defensive measures, they recommended that each family   
should collect their provisions, clothes, utensils, and   
herds, and be ready at a moment's notice to convey them,   
together with all infirm persons, to their strongholds in   
  
\* Muston, p. 71. Monastier, pp. 177-8.   
  


THE VILLAGE OF BALSIGLIA, SAN MARTINO.

82 THE WALDENSES.

the mountains. Meanwhile, the duke's army — if the   
collected ruffianism of Piedmont could be so called — came   
nearer every day.\*   
 On the 31st of October, a proclamation was posted   
throughout the Valley of Angrogna, calling on the in-   
habitants to return within the Roman pale, under penalty   
of extermination by fire and sword. On the day follow-   
ing, the 1st of November, the Papal army appeared at   
Bubiana, on the right bank of the Pelice, at the entrance   
to the Waldensian Valleys. The host numbered 4,000   
infantry and 200 horse;§ comprising, besides the des-   
peradoes that formed its main body, a few veterans,   
who had seen a great deal of service in the wars with   
France.   
 The Vaudois, the enemy being now in sight, humbled   
themselves, in a public fast, before God. Next, they   
partook together of the Lord's Supper. Refreshed in   
soul by these services, they proceeded to put in execution   
the measures previously resolved on. The old men and   
the women climbed the mountains, awakening the echoes   
with the psalms which they sung on their way to the Pra   
del Tor, within whose natural ramparts of rock and snow-   
clad peaks they sought asylum. The Vaudois popula-   
tion of the Valleys at that time was not more than   
18,000; their armed men did not exceed 1,200;₸ these   
were distributed at various passes and barricades to   
oppose the enemy, who was now near.   
 On the 2nd of November the Piedmontese army,   
putting itself in motion, crossed the Pelice, and advanced   
along the narrow defile that leads up to the Valleys,   
having the heights of Bricherasio on the right, and the   
spurs of Monte Friolante on the left, with the towering   
  
\* Muston, p. 72. Monastier, p. 182.   
§ Letter of Scipio Lentullus, Pastor of San Giovanni. (Leger,   
*Hist, des Eglises Vaud*., livr. ii., p. 35.)   
₸ So says the Pastor of Giovanni, Scipio Lentullus, in the letter   
already referred to. (Leger, livr. ii., p. 35.)

PANIC AMONG THE PIEDMONTESE. 83   
  
masses of the Vandalin and Castelluzzo in front. The   
Piedmontese encamped in the meadows of San Giovanni,   
within a stone's-throw of the point where the Val di   
Lueerna and the Val di Angrogna divide, the former to   
expand into a noble breadth of meadow and vineyard,   
running on between magnificent mountains, with their   
rich clothing of pastures, chestnut groves, and chalets,   
till it ends in the savage Pass of Mirabouc; and the   
latter to wind and climb in a grand succession of pre-   
cipice, and gorge, and grassy dell, till it issues in the   
funnel-shaped valley around which the ice-crowned moun-   
tains stand the everlasting sentinels.   
 It was the latter of these two valleys (Angrogna)   
that La Trinita first essayed to enter. He marched   
1,200 men into it, the wings of his army deploying over   
its bordering heights of La Cotiere. His soldiers were   
opposed by only a small body of Vaudois, some of whom   
were armed solely with the sling and the cross-bow.   
Skirmishing with the foe, the Vaudois retired, fighting,   
to the higher grounds. When the evening set in, neither   
side could claim a decided advantage. Wearied with   
skirmishing, both armies encamped for the night — the   
Vaudois on the heights of Roccomaneot, and the Pied-   
montese, their camp-fires lighted, on the lower hills of   
La Cotiere.   
 Suddenly the silence of the evening was startled by a   
derisive shout that rose from the Piedmontese host.   
What had happened to evoke these sounds of contempt?   
They had descried, between them and the sky, on the   
heights above them, the bending figures of the Vaudois.   
On their knees, the Waldensian warriors were supplica-   
ting the God of battles. Hardly had the scoffs with   
which the Piedmontese hailed the act died away, when a   
drum was heard to beat in a side valley. A child had   
got hold of the instrument, and was amusing itself with   
it. The soldiers of La Trinita saw in imagination a   
fresh body of Waldensians advancing from this lateral

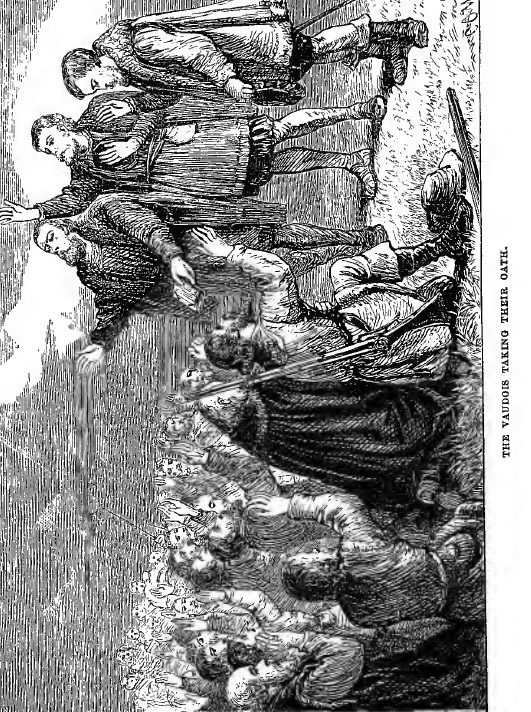
84 THE WALDENSES.   
  
defile to rush upon them. They seized their arms in no   
little disorder. The Vaudois, seeing the movement of   
the foe, seized theirs also, and rushed down-hill to anti-   
cipate the attack. The Piedmontese threw away their   
arms and fled, chased by the Waldenses, thus losing in   
half an hour the ground it had cost them a day's fight-   
ing to gain. The weapons abandoned by the fugitives   
formed a much-needed and most opportune supply to the   
Vaudois. As the result of the combats of the day, La   
Trinita had sixty-seven men slain; of the Vaudois, three   
only had fallen.\*   
 Opening on the left of La Trinita was the corn-clad,   
vine-clad, and mountain-ramparted Valley of Lucerna,   
with its towns, La Torre, Villaro, Bobbio, and others,   
forming the noblest of the Waldensian Valleys. La   
Trinita now occupied this valley with his soldiers. This   
was comparatively an easy achievement, almost all its   
inhabitants having fled to the Pra del Tor. Those that   
remained were mostly Romanists, who were, at that time,   
mixed with the Waldensian population, and even they,   
committing their wives and daughters to the keeping of   
their Vaudois neighbours, had sent them with them   
to the Pra del Tor, to escape the brutal outrages of the   
Papal army. On the following days La Trinita fought   
some small affairs with the Vaudois, in all of which he   
was repulsed with considerable slaughter. The arduous   
nature of the task he had in hand now began to dawn   
upon him.   
 The mountaineers, he saw, were courageous, and   
determined to die rather than submit their conscience to   
the Pope, and their families to the passions of his   
soldiers. He discovered, moreover, that they were a   
simple and confiding people, utterly unversed in the ways   
of intrigue. He was delighted to find these qualities in   
them, because he thought he saw how he could turn them   
  
\* Letter of Scipio Lentullus. (Leger, livr. ii., p. So.) Muston,   
pp. 73-4.

OUTWITTING THE VAUDOIS. 85   
  
to account. He had tools with him as cunning and vile   
as himself — Jacomel, the inquisitor; and Gastaud, his   
secretary; the latter feigned a love for the Gospel.   
These men he set to work. When they had prepared   
matters, he assembled the leading men of the Waldenses,   
and recited to them some flattering words, which he had   
heard, or professed to have heard, the duke and duchess   
make use of towards them; he protested that this was   
no pleasant business in which he was engaged, and that   
he would be glad to have it off his hands; peace, he   
thought, could easily be arranged, if they would only   
make a few small concessions to show that they were   
reasonable men; he would propose that they should   
deposit their arms in the house of one of their syndics,   
and permit him, for form's sake, to go with a small train,   
and celebrate mass in the Church of St. Laurenzo, in   
Angrogna, and afterwards pay a visit to the Pra del Tor.   
La Trinita's proposal proved the correctness of the   
estimate he had formed of Vaudois confidingness. The   
people spent a whole night in deliberating over the   
count's proposition, and, contrary to the opinion of their   
pastors and some of their laymen, agreed to accept it.\*   
 The Papal general said his mass in the Protestant   
church. After this he traversed the gloomy denies that   
led up to the famous Pra, on whose green slopes, with   
their snowy battlements, he was so desirous to feast his   
eyes; though, it is said, he showed evident trepidation   
when he passed the black pool of Tompie, with its   
memories of retribution. Having accomplished these   
feats in safety, he returned to wear the mask a little   
longer.   
 He resumed the efforts on which he professed to be   
so earnestly and laudably bent, of effecting peace. The   
duke had now come nearer, and was living at Vereelli,   
on the plain of Piedmont; La Trinita thought that the   
Vaudois ought by all means to send deputies thither. It   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 35. Monastier, pp. 184-5.

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would strengthen their supplication — indeed, all hut   
insure its success — if they would raise a sum of 20,000   
crowns. On payment of this sum he would withdraw   
his army, and leave them to practice their religion in   
peace.\* The Vaudois, unable to conceive of dissimula-   
tion like La Trinita's, made concession after concession.   
They had previously laid down their arms; they now   
sent deputies to the duke; next they taxed themselves   
to buy off his soldiers; and last, and worst of all, at the   
demand of La Trinita, they sent away their pastors. It   
was dreadful to think of a journey across the Col Julien   
at that season; yet it had to be gone. Over its snowy   
summits, where the winter drifts were continually   
obliterating the track, and piling up fresh wreaths;   
across the Valleys of Prali and San Martino, and over   
the ice-clad mountains beyond, had this sorrowful band   
of pastors to pursue their way, to find refuge among the   
Protestants in the French Valley of Pragelas. This   
difficult and dangerous route was forced upon them, the   
more direct road through the Valley of Perosa being   
closed by the marauders and assassins that infested it,   
and especially by those in the pay of the monks of   
Pinerolo.   
 The count believed that the poor people were now   
entirely in his power. His soldiers did their pleasure in   
the Valley of Lucerna. They pillaged the houses aban-   
doned by the Vaudois. The few inhabitants who had   
remained, as well as those who had returned, thinking   
that during the negotiations for peace hostilities would   
be suspended, were fain to make their escape a second   
time, and to seek refuge in the woods and caves of the   
higher reaches of the Valleys. The outrages committed   
by the ruffians to whom the Valley of Lucerna was now   
given over were of a kind that cannot be told. The   
historian Grilles has recorded a touching instance. A   
helpless man, who had lived a hundred and three years,   
  
\* Leger, livr. ii., p. 35.   
  
ATROCITIES IN THE WALDENSIAN VALLEYS. 87   
  
was placed in a cave, and his granddaughter, a girl of   
seventeen, was left to take care of him. The soldiers   
found out his hiding-place; the old man was murdered,   
and outrage was offered to his granddaughter. She fled   
from the brutal pursuit of the soldiers, leaped over a   
precipice and died. In another instance, an old man was   
pursued to the brink of a precipice by one of La Trinita's   
soldiers. The Vaudois had no alternative but to throw   
himself over the brink or die by the sword of his pur-   
suer. He stopped, turned round, and dropped on his   
knees, as if to supplicate for his life. The trooper was   
raising his sword to strike him dead, when the Vaudois,   
clasping him tightly round the legs, and swaying himself   
backwards with all his might, rolled over the precipice,   
dragging the soldier with him into the abyss.   
 Part of the sum agreed upon between La Trinita   
and the Waldenses had now been paid to him. To raise   
this money the poor people were under the necessity of   
selling their herds. The count now withdrew his army   
into winter quarters at Cavour, a point so near the   
Valleys that a few hours'' march would enable him to   
re-enter them at any moment. The corn, and oil, and wine   
he had not been able to carry away he destroyed. Even   
the mills he broke in pieces. His design appeared to be   
to leave the Vaudois only the alternative of submission,   
or of dying of hunger on their mountains. To afflict them   
yet more, he placed garrisons here and there in the Val-   
leys ; and, in the very wantonness of tyranny, required   
those who were themselves without bread to provide food   
for his soldiers. These soldiers were continually prowling   
about in search of victims on whom to gratify their   
cruelty and their lust. Those who had the unspeakable   
misfortune to be dragged into their den, had to undergo,   
if men, excruciating torture; if women, revolting out-   
rage.\*   
  
 \* Muston, p. 77. Monastier, pp. 186-7.

CHAPTER IX.   
  
 THE GREAT CAMPAIGN OF 1561.   
  
Mass or Extermination— Covenant in the Valleys— Their Solemn Oath-   
 How the Waldenses Eeeant— Their Energetic Preparations— La   
 Trinita Advances his Army — Twice attempts to Enter Angrogna,   
 and is Repulsed— A Third Attempt— Attacks on Three Points— He-   
 pulsed on all Three— Ravages the "Valley of Rora- Receives Rein-   
 forcements from France and Spain— Commences a Third Campaign —   
 Six Men against an Army— Utter Discomfiture— Extinction of La   
 Trinita's Host— Peace.

These frightful inflictions the Waldenses had submitted   
to, in the hope that the deputies whom they had sent   
to the duke would bring back with them an honourable   
peace. The impatience with which they waited their   
return may well be conceived. At last, after an abscence   
of six weeks, the commissioners reappeared in the   
Valleys; but their dejected faces, even before they had   
uttered a word, told that they had not succeeded. They   
had been sent back with an order, enjoining on the   
Vaudois unconditional submission to the church of Rome   
on pain of extermination. To enforce that order to the   
uttermost a more numerous army was at that moment   
being raised. The mass or universal slaughter — such   
was the alternative now presented to them.   
 The spirit of the people woke up. Rather than thus   
disgrace their ancestors, imperil their own souls, and   
entail a heritage of slavery on their children, they would   
die a thousand times. Their depression was gone; they   
were as men who had awakened from heavy sleep; they   
had found their arms. Their first care was to recall   
their pastors, their next to raise up their fallen churches,



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and their third to resume public service in them. Daily   
their courage grew, and once more joy lighted up their   
faces.   
 There came letters of sympathy and promises of help   
from their fellow-Protestants of Geneva, Dauphine, and   
Prance. Over the two latter countries persecution at   
that hour impended, but their own dangers made them   
all the more ready to succour their brethren of the Valleys.   
"Thereupon," says an historian, "took place one of   
those grand and solemn scenes, which, at once heroic and   
religious, seem rather adapted for an epic poem than for   
grave history."\*   
 The Waldenses of Lucerna sent deputies across the   
mountains, then covered to a great depth with snow, to   
propose an alliance with the Protestants of the Valley   
of Pragelas, who were at that time threatened by their   
sovereign, Francis I. The proposed alliance was joy-   
fully accepted. Assembling on a plateau of snow facing   
the mountains of Sestrieres, and the chain of the Guine-   
vert, the deputies swore to stand by each other, and   
render mutual support in the coming struggle.§ It was   
agreed that this oath of alliance should be sworn with a   
like solemnity in the Waldensian Valleys.   
 The deputies from Pragelas, crossing the Mount   
Julien, arrived at Bobbio on the 21st January, 1561.   
Their coming was singularly opportune. On the evening   
before, a ducal proclamation had been published in the   
Valleys, commanding the Vaudois, within twenty-four   
hours, to give attendance at mass, or abide the con-   
sequences — "fire, sword, the cord: the three arguments   
of Romanism," says Muston. This was the first news   
with which the Pragelese deputies were met on their   
arrival. With all the more enthusiasm they proceeded   
to renew their oath. Ascending a low hill behind   
Bobbio, the deputies from Pragelas, and those from   
Lucerna, standing erect in the midst of the assembled   
  
\* Muston, p. 78. § Monastier, p. 188. Muston, p. 78.

THE VAUDOIS OATH. 91

heads of families, who kneeled around, pronounced these   
words —   
 "In the name of the Vaudois Churches of the Alps,   
of Dauphine, and of Piedmont, which have ever been   
united, and of which we are the representatives, we here   
promise, our hands on our Bibles, and in the presence of   
God, that all our Valleys shall courageously sustain each   
other in matters of religion, without prejudice to the   
obedience due to their legitimate superiors.   
 "We promise to maintain the Bible, whole and with-   
out admixture, according to the usage of the true Apos-   
tolic Church, persevering in this holy religion, though it   
be at the peril of our life, in order that we may transmit   
it to our children, intact and pure, as we received it from   
our fathers.   
 "We promise aid and succour to our persecuted   
brothers, not regarding our individual interests, but   
the common cause; and not relying upon man, but   
upon God."\*   
 The physical grandeurs of the spot were in meet   
accordance with the moral sublimity of the transaction.   
Immediately beneath was spread out the green bosom of   
the valley, with here and there the silver of the Pelice   
gleaming out amid vineyards and acacia-groves. Filling   
the horizon on all sides save one stood up an array of   
magnificent mountains, white with the snows of winter.   
Conspicuous among them were the grand peaks of the Col   
de Malure and the Col de la Croix. They looked the   
silent and majestic witnesses of the oath in which a   
heroic people bound themselves to die rather than permit   
the defilement of their hearths, and the profanation of   
their altars, by the hordes of an idolatrous tyranny. It   
was in this grand fashion that the Waldenses opened one   
of the most brilliant campaigns ever waged by their arms.   
 The next morning, according to the duke's order,   
they must choose between the mass and the penalty   
  
 \* Muston, pp. 78-9.

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annexed to refusal. A neighbouring church — one of   
those which had been taken from them — stood ready,   
with altar decked and tapers lighted, for the Vaudois to   
hear their first mass. Hardly had the day dawned when   
the expected penitents were at the church door. They   
would show the duke in what fashion they meant to   
read their recantation. They entered the building. A   
moment they stood surveying the strange transformation   
their church had undergone, and then they set to work.   
To extinguish the tapers, pull down the images, and   
sweep into the street rosary, and crucifix, and all the   
other paraphernalia of the Popish worship, was but the   
work of a few minutes. The minister, Humbert Artus,   
then ascended the pulpit, and reading out as his text   
Isaiah xlv. 20 — "Assemble yourselves and come ; draw   
near together, ye that are escaped of the nations : they   
have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven   
image, and pray unto a God that cannot save'" —   
preached a sermon which struck- the key-note of the   
campaign then opening.   
 The inhabitants of the hamlets and chalets in the   
mountains rushed down, like their own winter torrents,   
into Lucerna, and the army of the Vaudois reinforced, set   
out to purge the temple at Villaro. On their way they   
encountered the Piedmontese garrison. They attacked   
and drove them back; the monks, seigneurs, and magis-   
trates, who had come to receive the abjuration of the   
heretics, accompanying the troops in their ignominious   
flight. The whole band of fugitives — soldiers, priests,   
and judges — shut themselves up in the town of Villaro,   
which was now besieged by the Vaudois. Thrice did the   
garrison from La Torre attempt to raise the siege, and   
thrice were they repulsed. At last, on the tenth day,   
the garrison surrendered, and had their lives spared, two   
Waldensian pastors accompanying them to La Torre, the   
soldiers expressing greater confidence in them than in   
any other escort.

VAUDOIS PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE. 93   
  
The Count La, Trinita, seeing his garrison driven   
out, struck his encampment at Cavour, and moved his   
army into the Valleys. He again essayed to sow dis-   
sension amongst the Vaudois by entangling them in   
negotiations for peace, but by this time they had learned   
too well the value of his promises to pay the least   
attention to them, or to intermit for an hour their pre-   
parations for defence. It was now the beginning of   
February, 1561.   
 The Vaudois laboured with the zeal of men who feel   
that their cause is a great and a righteous one, and are   
prepared to sacrifice all for it. They erected barricades;   
they planted ambushes; they appointed signals, to tele-   
graph the movements of the enemy from post to post.   
"Every house," says Muston, "became a manufactory   
oft pikes, bullets, and other weapons." They selected   
the best marksmen their Valleys could furnish, and   
formed them into the " Flying Company," whose duty   
it |was to hasten to the point where danger pressed   
the' most. To each body of fighting men they attached   
two pastors, to maintain the morale of their army. The   
pastors, morning and evening, led the public devotions;   
the|r prayed with the soldiers before going into battle;   
and when the fighting was over, and the Vaudois were   
chasing the enemy down their great mountains, and   
thrpugh their dark gorges, they exerted themselves to   
prevent the victory from being stained by any unneces-   
sary effusion of blood.   
 La Trinita knew well that if he would subjugate the   
Valleys, and bring the campaign to a successful end,   
he must make himself master of the Pra del Tor. Into   
that vast natural citadel was now gathered the main   
body of the Waldensian people. What of their herds   
and provisions remained to them had been transported   
thither; there they had constructed mills and baking-   
ovens; there, too, sat their council, and thence directed   
the whole operations of the defence. A blow struck

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there would crush the Vaudois' heart, and convert what   
the Waldenses regarded as their impregnable castle into   
their tomb.   
 Deferring the chastisement of the other valleys   
meanwhile, La Trinita directed all his efforts against   
Angrogna. His first attempt to enter it with his army-   
was made on the 4th February. The fightirjg lasted   
till night, and ended in his repulse. His second attempt,   
three days after, carried him some considerable way into   
Angrogna, burning and ravaging, but his partial success   
cost him dear, and the ground won had ultimately to be   
abandoned.\*   
 The 14th of February saw the severest struggle.   
Employing all his strategy to make himself master   
of the much-coveted Pra, with all in it, he divided his   
army into three corps, and advanced against it from   
three points. One body of troops, marching along the   
gorges of the Angrogna, and traversing the narrow   
chasm that leads up to the Pra, attacked it on the south.   
Another body, climbing the heights from Pramol, and   
crossing the snowy flanks of La Vêchera, tried to force   
an entrance on the east; while a third, ascending from   
San Martino, and crossing the lofty summits that wall   
in the Pra on the north, descended upon it from that   
quarter. The count's confident expectation was that   
if his men should be unable to force an entrance at   
one point, they were sure to do so at another.   
 No scout had given warning of what was approach-   
ing. "While three armies were marching to attack them,   
the Waldenses, in their grand valley, with its rampart of   
ice-crowned peaks, were engaged in their morning devo-   
tions. Suddenly the cries of fugitives, and the shouts   
of assailants, issuing from the narrow chasm on the   
south, broke upon their ear, together with the smoke of   
burning hamlets. Of the three points of attack, this   
was the easiest to be defended. Six brave Waldensian   
  
\* Monastier, p. 190. Muston, p. 80.

WALDENSIAN SUCCESSES. 95   
  
youths strode down the valley, to stop the way against   
La Trinita's soldiers. They were six against an army.   
 The road by which the soldiers were advancing is   
long and gloomy, and overhung by great rocks, and so   
narrow that only two men can march abreast. On this   
side rises the mountain; on that, far down, thunders the   
torrent; a ledge in the steep face of the cliff, running   
here in the darkness, there in the sunshine, serves as a   
pathway. It leads to what is termed the gate of the   
Pra. That gateway is formed by an angle of the   
mountain, which obtrudes upon the narrow ledge on   
the one side, while a huge rock rises on the other, and   
still further narrows the point of ingress into the Pra del   
Tor. Access into the famous Pra, of which La Trinita   
was now striving to make himself master, there is not   
on this side, save through this narrow opening; seeing   
that on the right rises the mountain; on the left yawns   
the gulf, into which, if one steps aside but in the least,   
he tumbles headlong. To friend and foe alike the only   
entrance into the Pra del Tor on the south is by this gate   
of Nature's own erecting. It was here that the six   
Waldensian warriors took their stand.\* Immovable as   
their own Alps, they not only checked the advance of   
the host, but drove it back in a panic-stricken mass,   
which made the precipices of the defile doubly fatal.   
 Others would have hastened to their aid, had not   
danger suddenly presented itself in another quarter. On   
the heights of La Vchera, crossing the snow, was de-   
scried an armed troop, making their entrance into the   
valley on the east. Before they had time to descend they   
were met by the Waldenses, who dispersed them and   
made them flee. Two of the attacking parties of the   
count have failed; will the third have better success?   
 As the Waldenses were pursuing the routed enemy on   
La Vechera, they saw yet another armed troop, which   
had crossed the mountains that separate the Val San   
  
\* Monastier, p. 191.

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Martino from tlie Pra del Tor on the north, descending   
upon them. Instantly the alarm was raised. A few   
men only could they dispatch to meet the invaders.   
These lay in ambush at the mouth of a defile through   
which the attacking party was making its way down into   
the Pra. Emerging from the defile, and looking down   
into the valley beneath them, they exclaimed, "Haste,   
I haste! Angrogna is ours." The Vaudois, starting up   
I and crying out, "It is you that are ours," rushed upon   
lthem sword in hand. Trusting to their superior num-   
ibers, the Piedmontese soldiers fought desperately. But   
a few minutes sufficed for the men of the Valleys to   
aurry from the points where they were now victorious,   
tp the assistance of their brethren. The invaders, seeing   
themselves attacked on all sides, turned and fled up the   
slopes they had just descended. Many were slain, nor   
would a man of them have re-crossed the mountains but   
for the pastor of the Flying Company, who, raising his   
voice to the utmost pitch, entreated the pursuers to spare   
the lives of those who were no longer able to resist.   
Among the slain was Charles Truchet, who so cruelly   
ravaged the commune of Rioclaret a few months before.   
A stone from a sling laid him prostrate on the ground,   
and his head was cut off with his own sword. Louis de   
Monteuil, another noted persecutor of the Vaudois,   
perished in the same action.   
 Furious at his repulse, the count La Trinita turned   
his arms against the almost defenceless Valley of Rora.   
He ravaged it, burning its little town, and chasing away   
its population of eighty families, who escaped over the   
snows of the mountains to Villaro, in the Valley of   
Lucerna. That valley he next entered with his soldiers,   
and though it was for the moment almost depopulated,   
the Popish general received so warm a welcome from   
those peasants who remained that, after being again and   
again beaten, he was fain to draw off his men-at-arms,   
and retreat to his old quarters at Cavour, there to chew



VIEW IN THE VILLAGE OF ANGROGNA.   
  
  
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the cud over his misfortunes, and hatch new stratagems   
and plan new attacks, which he fondly hoped would   
retrieve his disgraces.   
 La Trinita spent a month in reinforcing his army,   
greatly weakened by the losses it had sustained. The   
King of France sent him ten companies of foot, and   
some other choice soldiers.\* There came a regiment   
from Spain; and numerous volunteers from Piedmont,   
comprising many of the nobility. From 4,000, the   
original number of his army, it was now raised to 7,000.§   
He thought himself strong enough to begin a third   
campaign. He was confident that this time he would   
wipe out the disgrace which had befallen his arms, and   
sweep from the earth at once and for ever the great   
scandal of the Waldenses. He again directed all his   
efforts against Angrogna, the heart and bulwark of the   
Valleys.   
 It was Sunday, the 17th of March, 1561. The whole   
of the Vaudois assembled in the Pra del Tor had met   
on the morning of that day, soon after dawn, as was   
their wont, to unite in public devotion. The first rays   
of the rising sun were beginning to light up the white   
hills around them, and the last cadences of their morn-   
ing psalm were dying away on the grassy slopes of the   
Pra, when a sudden alarm was raised. The enemy was   
approaching by three routes. On the ridges of the   
eastern summits appeared one body of armed men;   
another was defiling up the chasm, and in a few minutes   
would pour itself, through the gateway already described,   
into the Pra; while a third was forcing itself over the   
rocks by a path intermediate between the two. In-   
stantly the enemy was met on all the points of approach.   
A handful of Waldensians sufficed to thrust back along   
the narrow gorge the fine of glittering cuirassed men,   
who were defiling through it. At the other two points,   
where bastions of rock and earth had been erected, the   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 36. Gilles, chap. 25. § Hid., part ii., p. 37.   
  
 LA TRINITA DEFEATED. 99   
  
fighting was severe, and the dead lay thick, hut the day   
at both places went against the invaders. Some of the   
ablest captains were among the slain. The number of   
the soldiers killed was so great that Count La Trinita is   
said to have sat down and wept when he beheld the heaps   
of the dead.\* It was matter of astonishment at the   
time that the Waldenses did not pursue the invaders, for   
had they done so, being so much better acquainted with   
the mountain-paths, not one of all that host would have   
been left alive to carry tidings of its discomfiture to the   
inhabitants of Piedmont. Their pastors restrained the   
victorious Vaudois, having laid it down as a maxim at   
the beginning of the campaign that they would use   
with moderation and clemency whatever victories the   
"God of battles " might be pleased to give them, and   
that they would spill no blood unless when absolutely   
necessary to prevent their own being shed. The   
number of slain Piedmontese was again out of all   
proportion to those who had fallen on the other side ;   
so much so, that it was currently said in the cities   
of Piedmont that "God was fighting for the barbets."§   
 More deeply humiliated and disgraced than ever, La   
Trinita led back the remains of his army to its old   
quarters. Well had it been for him if he had never   
set foot within the Waldensian territory, and not less so   
for many of those who followed him, including not a   
few of the nobles of Piedmont, whose bones were now   
bleaching on the mountains of the Vaudois. But the   
Popish general was slow to learn the lesson of these events.   
Even yet he harboured the design of returning to assail   
that fatal valley where he had lost so many laurels, and   
buried so many soldiers; but he covered his purpose   
with craft. . Negotiations had been opened between the   
men of the Valleys and the Duke of Savoy, and as they   
were proceeding satisfactorily, the Vaudois were with-   
  
\* Muston, p. 83. § *Ibid*. Monastier, p. 194.

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out suspicions of evil. This was the moment that La   
Trinita chose to attack them. He hastily assembled his   
troops, and on the night of the 16th April he marched   
them against the Pra del Tor, hoping to enter it   
unopposed, and give the Vaudois "as sheep to the   
slaughter."   
 The snows around the Pra were beginning to burn in   
the light of morniDg when the attention of the people,   
who had just ended their united worship, was attracted   
by unusual sounds which were heard to issue from the   
gorge that led into the valley. On the instant six brave   
mountaineers rushed to the gateway that opens from the   
gorge. The long file of La Trinita's soldiers was seen   
advancing two abreast, their helmets and cuirasses   
glittering in the light. The six Vaudois made their   
arrangements, and calmly waited till the enemy was   
near. The first two Vaudois, holding loaded muskets,   
knelt down. The second two stood erect, ready to fire   
over the heads of the first two. The third two under-   
took the loading of the weapons as they were discharged.   
The invaders came on. As the first two of the enemy   
turned the rock they were shot down by the two fore-   
most Vaudois. The next two of the attacking force fell   
in like manner by the shot of the Vaudois in the rear.   
The third rank of the enemy presented themselves only   
to be laid by the side of their comrades. In a few   
minutes a little heap of dead bodies blocked the pass,   
rendering impossible the advance of the accumulating   
file of the enemy in the chasm.   
 Meanwhile, other Vaudois climbed the mountains   
that overhang the gorge in which the Piedmontese army   
was imprisoned. Tearing up the great stones with   
which the hill-side was strewn, the Vaudois sent them   
rolling down upon the host. Unable to advance from   
the wall of dead in front, and unable to flee from the   
ever-accumulating masses behind, the soldiers were   
crushed in dozens by the falling rocks. Panic set in:

A BLOOD-DYED TORRENT. 101

and panic in such a position was dreadful. Wedged   
together on the narrow ledge, with a murderous rain   
of rocks falling on them, their struggle to escape was   
frightful. They jostled one another, and trod each   
other under foot, while vast numbers fell over the   
precipice, and were dashed on the rocks or drowned   
in the torrent.\* When those at the entrance of the   
valley, who were watching the result, saw the crystal of the   
Angrogna begin about midday to be changed into blood,   
"Ah I" said they, "the Pra del Tor has been taken; La   
Trinita has triumphed; there flows the blood of the   
Vaudois." And, indeed, the count on beginning his   
march that morning is said to have boasted that by   
noon the torrent of the Angrogna would be seen to   
change colour; and so in truth it did. Instead of a   
pellucid stream, rolling along on a white gravelly bed,   
which is its usual appearance at the mouth of the valley,   
it was now deeply dyed from recent slaughter. But   
when the few who had escaped the catastrophe returned   
to tell what had that day passed within the defiles of   
the Angrogna, it was seen that it was not the blood   
of the Vaudois, but the blood of their ruthless invaders,   
which dyed the waters of the Angrogna. The count   
withdrew on that same night with his army, to return   
no more to the Valleys.   
 Negotiations were again resumed, not this time   
through the Count La Trinita, but through Philip of   
Savoy, Count of Baconis, and were speedily brought to   
a satisfactory issue. The Duke of Savoy had but small   
merit in making peace with the men whom he found he   
could not conquer. The capitulation was signed on the   
5th of June, 1561, and its first clause granted an in-   
demnity for all offences. It is open to remark that this   
indemnity was given to those who had suffered, not to   
those who had committed the offences it condoned. The   
articles that followed permitted the Vaudois to erect   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 37. Muston, p. 85.   
  
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churches in their Valleys, with the exception of two or   
threeof their towns, andtoholdpublic worship — in short, to   
celebrate all the offices of their religion. All the "ancient   
franchises, immunities, and privileges, whether conceded   
by his Highness, or by his Highness's predecessors,''   
were renewed, provided they were vouched by public   
documents.\* Such was the arrangement that closed   
this war of fifteen months. The Vaudois ascribed it in   
great part to the influence of the good Duchess Mar-   
garet. The Pope designated it a "pernicious example,"   
which he feared would not want imitators in those times   
when the love of many to the Roman See was waxing   
cold. It stank in the nostrils of the prelates and monks   
of Piedmont, to whom the heretics had been a free booty.   
Nevertheless, Duke Emanuel Philibert faithfully main-   
tained its stipulations, the duchess being by his side to   
counteract any pressure in the contrary direction. This   
peace, together with the summer that was now opening,   
began to slowly efface the deep scars persecution had   
left on the Valleys; and what further helped to console   
and reanimate this brave but afflicted people, were the   
sympathy and aid universally tendered them by Protes-   
tants abroad, in particular by Calvin and the Elector   
Palatine, the latter addressing a spirited letter to the   
duke on behalf of his persecuted subjects.§   
 Nothing was more admirable than the spirit of de-   
votion which the Vaudois exhibited all through these   
terrible conflicts. Their Valleys resounded not less with   
the voice of prayer and praise, than with the din of arms.   
Their opponents came from carousing, from blaspheming,   
from murdering, to engage in battle; the Waldenses   
rose from their knees to unsheathe the sword, and wield   
it in a cause which they firmly believed to be that of   
Him to whom they had bent in supplication. When   
  
\* The Articles of Capitulation are given in full in Leger, part ii.,   
pp. 38-40.   
§ Leger, part ii., p. 41.

VAUDOIS REJOICINGS AFTER BATTLE. 103   
  
their little army went a-field their barbes always accom-   
panied it, to inspirit the soldiers by suitable exhortations   
before joining battle, and to moderate in the hour of   
victory a vengeance which, however excusable, would   
yet have tarnished the glory of the triumph. "When the   
fighting men hastened to the bastion or to the defile, the   
pastors betook themselves to the mountain's slope, or to its   
summit, and there with uplifted hands supplicated help   
from the "Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty   
in battle." When the battle had ceased, and the enemy   
were in flight, and the victors had returned from chasing   
their invaders from their Valleys, the grey-haired pastor,   
the lion-hearted man of battle, the matron, the maiden,   
the stripling, and the little child, would assemble in the   
Pra del Tor, and while the setting sun was kindling   
into glory the mountain-tops of their once more ran-   
somed land, they would raise their voices together, and   
sing the old war-song of Judah, in strains so heroic   
that the great rocks around them would send back the   
thunder of their praise in louder echoes than those of the   
battle whose triumphant issue they were celebrating.

CHAPTER X.

WALDENSIAN COLONIES IN CALABEIA AND APULIA.

An Inn at Turin— Two Waldensian Youths— A Stranger— Invitation to   
 Calabria— The Waldenses Search the Land— They Settle there—   
 Their Colony Flourishes— Build Towns— Cultivate Science— They   
 Hear of the Reformation— Petition for a Fixed Pastor— Jean Louis   
 Paschale sent to them— Apprehended— Brought in Chains to Naples-   
 Conducted to Borne.

One day, about the year 1340, two Waldensian youths   
were seated in an inn in Turin, engaged in earnest con-   
versation respecting their home prospects. Shut up in   
their valleys, and cultivating with toil their somewhat   
sterile mountains, they sighed for wider limits and a   
more fertile land. "Come with me," said a stranger,   
who had been listening unperceived to their discourse,   
"Come with me, and I will give you fertile fields for   
your barren rocks.'" The person who now courteously   
addressed the youths, and whose steps Providence had   
directed to the same hotel with themselves, was a gentle-   
man from Calabria, at the southern extremity of the   
Italian Peninsula.   
 On their return to the Valleys the youths reported   
the words of the stranger, and the flattering hopes he   
had held out should they be willing to migrate to this   
southern land, where skies more genial, and an earth   
more fertile, would reward their labour with more   
bounteous harvests. The elders of the Vaudois people   
listened not without interest. The population of their   
Valleys had recently been largely increased by numbers   
of Albigensian refugees, who had escaped from the mas-   
sacres of Innocent III. in the south of France; and the

A WALDENSIAN COLONY. 105   
  
Waldenses, feeling themselves overcrowded, were pre-   
pared to welcome any fair scheme that promised an   
enlargement of their boundaries. But before acceding   
to the proposition of the stranger, they thought it advis-   
able to send competent persons to examine this new and   
to them unknown land. The Vaudois explorers returned   
with a flattering account of the conditions and capabili-   
ties of the country they had been invited to occupy.   
Compared with their own more northern mountains,   
whose summits Winter covered all the year through with   
his snows, whose gorges were swept by furious gusts,   
and whose sides were stripped of their corn and vines by   
devastating torrents, Calabria was a land of promise.   
"There are beautiful hills," says the historian Gilles,   
describing this settlement, "clothed with all kinds of   
fruit-trees spontaneously springing up according to their   
situation — in the plains, vines and chestnuts; on the   
rising ground, walnuts and every fruit-tree. Every-   
where were seen rich arable land and few labourers."   
A considerable body of emigrants set out for this new   
country. The young men were accompanied to their   
future homes with partners. They carried with them the   
Bible in the Romance version, "that holy ark of the   
New Covenant, and of everlasting peace.''   
 The conditions of their emigration offered a reason-   
able security for the free and undisturbed exercise of   
their worship. "By a convention with the local   
seigneurs, ratified later by the King of Naples, Fer-   
dinand of Arragon, they were permitted to govern their   
own affairs, civil and spiritual, by their own magistrates,   
and their own pastors."\* Their first settlement was   
near the town of Montalto. Half a century later rose   
the city of San Sexto, which afterwards became the   
capital of the colony. Other towns and villages sprang   
up, and the region, which before had been thinly in-   
habited, and but poorly cultivated, was soon transformed   
  
\* Muston, p. 37.   
  
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into a smiling garden. The swelling hills were clothed   
with fruit-trees, and the plains waved with luxuriant   
crops. The Marquis of Spinello was so struck with   
the prosperity and wealth of the settlements, that   
he offered to cede lands on his own vast and fertile   
estates where these colonists might build cities and plant   
vineyards. One of their towns he authorised them to   
surround with a wall; hence its name, La Guardia.   
This town, situated on a height near the sea, soon   
became populous and opulent.\*   
 Towards the close of the same century, another body   
of Vaudois emigrants from Provence arrived in the south   
of Italy. The new-comers settled in Apulia, not far   
from their Calabrian brethren. Villages and towns arose,   
and the region speedily put on a new face under the   
improved arts and husbandry of the colonists. Their   
smiling homes, which looked forth from amid groves of   
orange and myrtle, their hills covered with the olive and   
the vine, their corn-fields and pasture-lands, were the   
marvel and the envy of their neighbours.   
 In 1500 there arrived in Calabria yet another emi-   
gration from the Valleys of Pragelas and Praissinieres.   
This third body of colonists established themselves on   
the Volturata, a river which flows from the Apennines   
into the Bay of Tarento. With the increase of their   
numbers came an increase of prosperity to the colonists.   
Their neighbours, who knew not the secret of this pros-   
perity, were lost in wonder and admiration of it. The   
physical attributes of the region occupied by the emi-   
grants differed in no respect from those of their own   
lands, both were placed under the same sky, but how   
different the aspect of the one from that of the other!   
The soil, touched by the plough of Vaudois, seemed to   
feel a charm that made it open its bosom and yield a   
tenfold increase. The vine tended by Vaudois hands   
bore richer clusters, and strove in generous rivalry with   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 333.

PROSPERITY OF THE VAUDOIS COLONIES. 107   
  
the fig and the olive to outdo them in enriching with its   
produce the Vaudois board. And how delightful the   
quiet and order of their towns; and the air of happiness   
on the faces of the people I And how sweet to listen to   
the bleating of the flocks on the hills, the lowing of the   
herds in the meadows, the song of the reaper and grape-   
gatherer, and the merry voices of children at play around   
the hamlets and villages! For about 200 years these   
colonies continued to flourish.   
 "It is a curious circumstance," says the historian   
M'Crie, "that the first gleam of light, at the revival of   
letters, shone on that remote spot of Italy where the   
Vaudois had found an asylum. Petrarch first acquired   
a knowledge of the Greek tongue from Barlaam, a monk   
of Calabria; and Boccaccio was taught it from Leontius   
Pilatus, who was a hearer of Barlaam, if not also a   
native of the same place."\* Muston says that "the   
sciences flourished among them."§ The day of the   
Renaissance had not yet broken. The flight of scholars,   
which was to bear with it the seeds of ancient learning   
to the West, had not yet taken place; but the Vaudois   
of Calabria would seem to have anticipated that great   
literary revival. They had brought with them the Scrip-   
tures in the Romance version. They possessed doubtless   
the taste and genius for which the Romance nations were   
then famous; and, moreover, in their southern settlement   
they may have had access to some knowledge of those   
sciences which the Saracens then so assiduously culti-   
vated; and what so likely, with their leisure and wealth,   
as that these Vaudois should turn their attention to   
letters as well as to husbandry, and make their   
adopted country vocal with the strains of that min-   
strelsy with which Provence and Dauphine had re-   
sounded so melodiously, till its music was quenched at   
once and for ever by the murderous arms of Simon   
  
\* M'Crie, Italy, pp. 7, 8.   
§ Muston, Israel of the Alps, p. 38.

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de Montfort? But here we can only doubtfully guess,   
for tlie records of this interesting people are scanty and   
dubious.   
 These colonists kept up their connection with the   
mother country of the Valleys, though situated at the   
opposite extremity of Italy. To keep alive their faith,   
which was the connecting link, pastors were sent in   
relays of two to minister in the churches of Calabria   
and Apulia; and when they had fulfilled their term of   
two years they were replaced by other two. The barbes,   
on their way back to the Valleys, visited their brethren   
in the Italian towns; for at that time there were few   
cities in the peninsula in which the Vaudois were not to   
be found. The grandfather of the Vaudois historian,   
Grilles, in one of these pastoral visits to Venice, was   
assured by the Waldenses whom he there conversed with,   
that there were not fewer than 6,000 of their nation in   
that city. Fear had not yet awakened the suspicions   
and kindled the hatred of the Romanists, for the Refor-   
mation was not yet come. Nor did the Waldenses care   
to thrust their opinions upon the notice of their neigh-   
bours. Still the priests could not help observing that   
the manners of these northern settlers were, in many   
things, peculiar and strange. They eschewed revels and   
fetes; they had their children taught by foreign school-   
masters; in their churches was neither image nor lighted   
taper; they never went on pilgrimage; they buried their   
dead without the aid of the priests; and never were they   
known to bring a candle to the Virgin's shrine, or pur-   
chase a mass for the help of their dead relatives. These   
peculiarities were certainly startling, but one thing went   
far to atone for them — they paid with the utmost punc-   
tuality and fidelity their stipulated tithes; and as the   
value of their lands was yearly increasing, there was a   
corresponding yearly increase in both the tithe due to   
the priest and the rent payable to the landlord, and   
neither was anxious to disturb a state of things so bene-

JEAN LOUIS PASCHALE. 109   
  
fioial to himself, and which was every day becoming   
more advantageous.\*   
 But in the middle of the sixteenth century the breath   
of Protestantism from the North began to move over   
these colonies. The pastors who visited them told them   
of the synod which had been held in Angrogna in 1532,   
and which had been as the "beginning of months" to   
the ancient Church of the Valleys. More glorious   
tidings still did they communicate to the Christians   
of Calabria. In Germany, in France, in Switzerland,   
and in Denmark the old Gospel had blazed forth in a   
splendour unknown to it for ages. The Lamp of the   
Alps was no longer the one solitary light in the world:   
around it was a circle of mighty torches, whose rays,   
blending with those of the older luminary, were com-   
bining to dispel the night from Christendom. At the   
hearing of these stupendous things their spirit revived:   
their past conformity appeared to them like cowardice;   
they, too, would take part in the great work of the   
emancipation of the nations, by making open confession   
of the truth. No longer content with the mere visit   
of a pastor, they petitioned the mother Cburch to send   
them one who might permanently discharge amongst   
them the office of the holy ministry.§   
 There was at that time a young minister at Geneva,   
a native of Italy, and him the Church of the Valleys   
designated to the perilous but honourable post. His   
name was Jean Louis Paschale; he was a native of Coni,   
in the Plain of Piedmont. By birth a Romanist, his   
first profession was that of arms; but from a knight of   
the sword he had become, like Loyola, though in a truer   
sense, a knight of the Cross. He had just completed   
  
\* Perrin, Histoire des Vaudois, p. 197. Monastier, pp. 203-4.   
§ Muston, p. 38. Monastier and M'Crie say that the application   
for a pastor was made to Geneva, and that Pasohale set out for   
Calahria, accompanied hy another minister and two schoolmasters. It   
is prohable that the application was made to Geneva through the in-   
termediation of the home Church.

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his theological studies at Lausanne. He was betrothed   
to a young Piedmontese Protestant, Camilla Guerina.\*   
"Alas I" she sorrowfully exclaimed, when he intimated   
to her his departure for Calabria, "so near to Rome and   
so far from me." They parted, nevermore to meet on   
earth.   
 The young minister carried with him to Calabria the   
energetic spirit of Geneva. His preaching was with   
power j the zeal and courage of the Calabrian flock   
revived, and the light formerly hid under a bushel was   
now openly displayed. Its splendour attracted the igno-   
rance and awoke the fanaticism of the region. The   
priests, who had tolerated a heresy that had conducted   
itself so modestly, and paid its dues so punctually, could   
be blind no longer. The Marquis of Spinello, who had   
been the protector of these colonists hitherto, finding his   
kindness more than repaid in the flourishing condition of   
his states, was compelled to move against them. "That   
dreadful thing, Lutheranism," he was told, "had broken   
in, and would soon destroy all things."   
 The marquis summoned the pastor and his flock before   
him. After a few moments' address from Paschale, the   
marquis dismissed the members of the congregation with   
a sharp reprimand, but the pastor he threw into the dun-   
geons of Foscalda. The bishop of the diocese next took   
the matter into his own hands, and removed Paschale to   
the prison of Cosenza, where he was confined eight   
months.   
 The Pope heard of the case, and delegated Cardinal   
Alexandrini, Inquisitor-General, to extinguish the heresy   
in the Kingdom of Naples.§ Alexandrini ordered Pas-   
chale to be removed from the Castle of Cosenza, and   
conducted to Naples. On the journey he was subjected   
to terrible sufferings. Chained to a gang of prisoners —   
the handcuffs so tight that they entered the flesh — he   
spent nine days on the road, sleeping at night on the   
  
\* M'Crie, p. 324. § Monastier, p. 205.   
  
  
   
 PARTING OF PASCHALE FROM HIS BETROTHED\*

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bare earth, which was exchanged on his arrival at Naples   
for a deep, damp dungeon,\* the stench of which almost   
suffocated him.   
 On the 16th of May, 1560, Paschale was taken in   
chains to Rome, and imprisoned in the Torre di Nona,   
where he was thrust into a cell not less noisome than   
that which he had occupied at Naples.   
 His brother, Bartolomeo, having obtained letters of   
recommendation, came from Coni to procure, if possible,   
some mitigation of his fate. The interview between the   
two brothers, as told by Bartolomeo, was most affecting.   
"It was quite hideous to see him," says he, "with his   
bare head, and his hands and arms lacerated by the small   
cords with which he was bound, like one about to be led   
to the gibbet. On advancing to embrace him I sank to   
the ground. ‘My brother,’ said he, 'if you are a   
Christian, why do you distress yourself thus? Do you   
know that a leaf cannot fall to the ground without the   
will of God Comfort yourself in Christ Jesus, for the   
present troubles are not worthy to be compared with the   
glory to come.'" His brother, a Romanist, offered him   
half his fortune if only he would recant, and save his   
life. Even this token of affection could not move him.   
"Oh, my brother!" said he, "the danger in which you   
are involved gives me more distress than all that I   
suffer."§   
 He wrote to his affianced bride with a pen which, if   
it softened the picture of his own great sufferings, freely   
expressed the affection he bore for her, which "grows,"   
said he, "with that I feel for God." Nor was he un-   
mindful of his flock in Calabria. "My state is this,"   
says he, in a letter which he addressed to them, "I feel   
my joy increase every day, as I approach nearer the hour   
in which I shall be offered a sweet-smelling sacrifice to   
the Lord Jesus Christ, my faithful Saviour; yea, so in-   
expressible is my joy that I seem to myself to be free   
  
\* M'Crie, p. 325. § M'Crie, pp. 325-7.

PASCHALE’S GAIN. 113   
  
from captivity, and am prepared to die for Christ, and   
not only once, but ten thousand times, if it were pos-   
sible ; nevertheless, I persevere in imploring the Divine   
assistance by prayer, for I am convinced that man is a   
miserable creature when left to himself, and not upheld   
and directed by God." \*   
  
\* Ibid., pp. 326-7.

CHAPTER XI.

EXTINCTION OF WALDENSES IN CALABEIA.

Arrival of Inquisitors in Calabria— Flight of the Inhabitants of San Sexto   
 —Pursued and Destroyed— La Guardia— Its Citizens Seized— Their   
 Tortures— Horrible Butchery— The Calabrian Colony Exterminated—   
 Louis Paschale— His Condemnation— The Castle of St. Angelo— The   
 Pope, Cardinals, and Citizens— The Martyr— His Last Words— His   
 Execution— His Tomb.

While Paschale was calmly awaiting a martyr's death   
in his dungeon at Rome, how fared it with his flock in   
Calabria, on whom the gathering storm had burst in   
terrific violence?   
 When it was known that Protestant ministers had   
been sent from Geneva to the Waldensian Churches in   
Calabria, the Inquisitor- General, as already mentioned,   
and two Dominican monks, Valerio Malvieino and   
Alfonso Urbino, were dispatched by the Sacred College   
to reduce these Churches to the obedience of the Papal   
See, or stamp them out. They arrived at San Sexto,   
and assembling the inhabitants, assured them it was not   
intended to do them any harm, would they but dismiss   
their Lutheran teachers and come to mass. The bell was   
rung for the celebration of the Sacrament, but the   
citizens, instead of attending the service, left the town   
in a body, and retired to a neighbouring wood. Con-   
cealing their chagrin, the inquisitors took their departure   
from San Sexto, and set out for La Guardia, the gates   
of which they locked behind them when they had   
entered, to prevent a second flight. Assembling the   
inhabitants, they told them that their co-religionists of   
San Sexto had renounced their errors, and dutifully

MASSACRE OF VAUDOIS COLONISTS. 115   
  
attended mass, and they exhorted them to follow their   
good example, and return to the fold of the Roman   
shepherd; warning them at the same time, that should   
'they refuse they would expose themselves, as heretics, to   
the loss of goods and life. The poor people, taken   
unawares, and believing what was told them, consented   
to hear mass; but no sooner was the ceremony ended,   
and the gates of the town opened, than they learned the   
deceit which had been practised upon them. Indignant,   
and at the same time ashamed of their own weakness,   
they resolved to leave the place in a body, and join their   
brethren in the woods, but were withheld from their   
purpose by the persuasion and promises of their feudal   
superior, Spinello.   
 The Inquisitor-General, Alexandrini, now made   
request for two companies of men-at-arms, to enable   
him to execute his mission. The required aid was   
instantly given, and the soldiers were sent in pursuit   
of the inhabitants of San Sexto. Tracking them to   
their hiding-places, in the thickets and the caves of the   
mountains, they slaughtered many of them; others, who   
escaped, were pursued with bloodhounds, as if they had   
been wild beasts. Some of these fugitives scaled the   
craggy summits of the Apennines, and hurling down the   
stones on the soldiers who attempted to follow them,   
compelled them to desist from the pursuit.   
 Alexandrini dispatched a messenger to Naples for   
more troops to quell what he called the rebellion of the   
Vaudois. The viceroy obeyed the summons by coming   
in person with an army. He attempted to storm the   
fugitives, now strongly entrenched in the great moun-   
tains, whose summits of splintered rock, towering high   
above the pine forests that clothe their sides, presented to   
the fugitives an almost inaccessible retreat. The Wal-   
denses offered to emigrate ; but the viceroy would listen   
to nothing but their return within the pale of the Church   
of Rome. They were prepared to yield their lives

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rather than accept peace on such conditions. The viceroy   
now ordered his men to advance; but the shower of   
rocks that met his soldiers in the ascent hurled them to   
the bottom, a discomfited mass, in which maimed and   
dying were confusedly mingled with the corpses of the   
slain.   
 The viceroy, seeing the difficulty of the enterprise,   
issued an edict promising a free pardon to all bandits,   
outlaws, and other criminals who might be willing to   
undertake the task of scaling the mountains and attack-   
ing the strongholds of the Waldenses. In obedience to   
this summons, there assembled a mob of desperadoes,   
who were but too familiar with the secret paths of the   
Apennines. Threading their way through the woods,   
and clambering over the great rocks, these assassins   
rushed from every side on the barricades on the summit,   
and butchered the poor Vaudois. Thus were the in-   
habitants of San Sexto exterminated, some dying by the   
sword, some by fire, while others were torn by blood-   
hounds or perished by famine.\*   
 While the outlaws of the Neapolitan viceroy were   
busy in the mountains, the Inquisitor-General and his   
monks were pursuing their work of blood at La Guardia.   
The military force at their command not enabling them   
to take summary measures with the inhabitants, they had   
recourse to stratagem. Enticing the citizens outside   
the gates, and placing soldiers in ambush, they succeeded   
in getting into their power upwards of 1,600 persons.§   
Of these, seventy were sent in chains to Montalto, and   
tortured, in the hope of compelling them to accuse them-   
selves of practising shameful crimes in their religious   
assemblies. No such confession, however, could the most   
prolonged tortures wring from them. "Stefano Carlino,"   
says M'Crie, "was tortured till his bowels gushed out;"   
and another prisoner, named Verminel, "was kept during   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 333. M'Crie, p. 303. Muston, p. 41.   
§ Monastier, p. 206.   
  
 THE TRAGEDY AT MONTALTO. 117   
  
eight hours on a horrid instrument called the hell, but   
persisted in denying the atrocious calumny."\* Some   
were thrown from the tops of towers, or precipitated over   
cliffs; others were torn with iron whips, and finally   
beaten to death with fiery brands; and others, smeared   
with pitch, were burned alive.   
 But these horrors pale before the bloody tragedy   
at Montalto, enacted by the Marquis di Buccianici,   
whose zeal was quickened, it is said, by the promise of a   
cardinal's hat to his brother if he would clear Calabria   
of heresy. One's blood runs cold at the perusal of the   
deed. It was witnessed by a servant to Ascanio Caraccioli,   
himself a Roman Catholic, and described by him in a   
letter, which was published in Italy, along with other   
accounts of the horrible transaction, and has been quoted   
by M'Crie. "Most illustrious sir, I have now to inform   
you of the dreadful justice which began to be executed   
on these Lutherans early this morning, being the 11th   
of June. And, to tell you the truth, I can compare   
it to nothing but the slaughter of so many sheep. They   
were all shut up in one house as in a sheep-fold. The   
executioner went, and bringing out one of them, covered   
his face with a napkin, or *benda*, as we call it, led him   
out to a field near the house, and causing him to kneel   
down, cut his throat with a knife. Then, taking off the   
bloody napkin, he went and brought out another, whom   
he put to death after the same manner. In this way the   
whole number, amounting to eighty-eight men, were   
butchered. I leave you to figure to yourself the lamen-   
table spectacle, for I can scarcely refrain from tears while   
I write; nor was there any person, after witnessing the   
execution of one, could stand to look on a second. The   
meekness and patience with which they went to martyr-   
dom and death are incredible. Some of them at their   
death professed themselves of the same faith with us,   
but the greater part died in their cursed obstinacy. All   
  
\* M'Crie, p. 304.

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the old met their death with cheerfulness, but the young   
exhibited symptoms of fear. I still shudder while I   
think of the executioner with the bloody knife in his   
teeth, the dripping napkin in his hand, and his arms   
besmeared with gore, going to the house, and taking   
out one victim after another, just as a butcher does the   
sheep which he means to kill."\* Their bodies were   
quartered, and stuck up on pikes along the high road   
leading from Montalto to Château-Vilar, a distance   
of thirty-six miles.   
 Numbers of men and women were burned alive, many   
were drafted off to the Spanish galleys, some made their   
submission to Rome, and a few, escaping from the scene   
of these horrors, reached, after infinite toil, their native   
Valleys, to tell that the once-flourishing Waldensian   
colony and Church in Calabria no longer existed, and   
that they only had been left to carry tidings to their   
brethren of its utter extermination.   
 Meanwhile, preparations had been made at Rome for   
the trial of Jean Louis Paschale. On the 8th of Septem-   
ber, 1560, he was brought out of his prison, conducted   
to the Convent della Minerva, and cited before the Papal   
tribunal. He confessed his Saviour, and, with a serenity   
to which the countenances of his judges were strangers,   
he listened to the sentence of death, which was carried   
into execution on the following day.   
 Standing upon the summit of the Janiculum Mount,   
vast crowds could witness the spectacle. In front the   
Campagna spreads out its once glorious but now desolated   
bosom and winding through it like a thread of gold is   
seen the Tiber, while the Apennines, sweeping round it in   
craggy grandeur, enclose it like a vast wall. Immediately   
beneath, uprearing her domes and monuments and palaces,   
with an air that seems to say, "I sit a queen," is the   
city of Rome. Yonder, asserting an easy supremacy   
  
\* Pantaleon, *Rerum in Eccles. Gest. Hist*.,ff. 337 — 8. De Porta,   
torn. ii.,pp. 309, 312 — ex M'Crie, pp. 305—6.   
  
 PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXECUTION OF PASCHALE. 119   
  
amid the other f abrics of the Eternal City, is the scarred   
and riven yet Titanic form of the Coliseum, with its   
stains of early Christian blood not yet washed out.   
By its side, the partner of its guilt and doom, lies the   
Palatine, once the palace of the world's master, now   
a low mound of ruins, with its row of melancholy   
cypresses, the only mourners on that site of vanished   
glory and fallen empire. Nearer, burning in the midday   
sun, is the proud cupola of St. Peter's, flanked on the one   
side by the buildings of the Inquisition, and on the other   
by the huge Mole of Hadrian, beneath whose gloomy   
ramparts old Tiber rolls sluggishly and sullenly along.   
But what shout is this which we hear? Why does   
Rome keep holiday ? Why do all her bells ring? Lo!   
from every street and piazza eager crowds rush forth,   
and uniting in one overwhelming and surging stream,   
they are seen rolling across the Bridge of St. Angelo,   
and pressing in at the gates of the old fortress, which   
are thrown wide open to admit this mass of human   
beings.   
 Entering the court-yard of the old castle, an imposing   
sight meets the eye. What a confluence of ranks, digni-   
ties, and grandeurs! In the centre is placed a chair,   
the emblazonry of which tells us that it claims to rise in   
authority and dignity over the throne of kings. The   
Pontiff, Pius IV., has already taken his seat upon it, for   
he has determined to be present at the tragedy of to-day.   
Behind his chair, in scarlet robes, are his cardinals and   
counsellors, with many dignitaries besides in mitres and   
cowls, ranged in circles, according to their place in the   
Papal body. Behind the ecclesiastics are seated, row   
on row, the nobility and beauty of Rome. Plumes   
wave, stars gleam, and seem to mock the frocks and   
cowls gathered near them, whose wearers, however,   
would not exchange these mystic garments for all the   
bravery that blazes around them. The vast sweep of   
the Court of St. Angelo is densely occupied. Its ample

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floor is covered from end to end with a closely-wedged   
mass of citizens, who have come to see the spectacle.   
In the centre of the throng, rising a little way over   
the sea of human heads, is seen a scaffold, with an   
iron stake, and beside it a bundle of faggots.   
 A slight movement begins to be perceptible in the   
crowd beside the gate. Some one is entering. The   
next moment a storm of hissing and execration salutes   
the ear. It is plain that the person who has just made   
his entrance is the object of universal dislike. The   
clank of irons on the stone floor of the court, as he   
comes forward, tells how heavily his limbs are loaded   
with fetters. He is still young; but his face is pale   
and haggard with suffering. He lifts his eyes, and with   
countenance undismayed surveys the vast assembly, and   
the dismal apparatus that stands in the midst of it,   
waiting its victim. There sits a calm courage on his   
brow; the serene light of deep, untroubled peace beams   
in his eye. He mounts the scaffold, and stands beside   
the stake. Every eye is now turned, not on the wearer   
of the tiara, but on the man who is clad in the sanbenito.   
"Good people," says the martyr — and the whole as-   
sembly keep silence — "I am come here to die for con-   
fessing the doctrine of my Divine Master and Saviour,   
Jesus Christ." Then turning to Pius IV. he arraigned   
him as the enemy of Christ, the persecutor of his people,   
and the Anti-Christ of Scripture, and concluded by   
summoning him and all his cardinals to answer for   
their cruelties and murders before the throne of the   
Lamb. "At his words," says the historian Crespin,   
"the people were deeply moved, and the Pope and the   
cardinals gnashed their teeth." \*   
 The inquisitors hastily gave the signal. The exe-   
cutioners came round him, and having strangled him,   
they kindled the faggots, and the flames blazing up   
  
\* Crespin, *Hist. del Martyrs*, pp. 506-16. Leger, part i., p. 204,   
and part ii., p. 335.   


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speedily reduced his body to ashes. For once the Pope   
had performed his function. With his key of fire, which   
he may truly claim to carry, he had opened the celestial   
doors, and had sent his poor prisoner from the dark   
dungeons of the Inquisition, to dwell in the palace of   
the sky.   
 So died, or rather passed into the life eternal, Jean   
Louis Paschale, the Waldensian missionary and pastor   
of the flock in Calabria. His ashes were collected and   
thrown into the Tiber, and by the Tiber they were   
borne to the Mediterranean. And this was the grave   
of the preacher-martyr, whose noble bearing and un-   
daunted courage before the Pope himself gave added   
value to his splendid testimony for the Protestant cause.   
Time may consume the marble, violence or war may   
drag down the monumental pile;   
 "The pyramids that cleave heaven's jewelled portal;   
 Elean Jove's star-spangled dome; the tomb   
 Where rich Mausolus sleeps — are not immortal."\*   
  
But the tomb of the far-sounding sea to which the   
ashes of Paschale were committed, with a final display   
of impotent rage, was a nobler mausoleum than ever   
Pome raised to any of her Pontiffs.   
  
\* Sextus JPropertius (Oranstoun's translation), p. 119,

CHAPTER XII.

THE YEAR OE THE PLAGUE.

Peace— Re-occupation of their Homes— Partial Famine— Contributions   
 of Foreign Churches— Castrocaro, Governor of the Valleys— His   
 Treacheries and Oppressions — Letter of Elector Palatine to the Duke   
 — A Voice raised for Toleration — Fate of Castrocaro — The Plague —   
 Awful Ravages— 10,000 Deaths— Only Two Pastors Survive— Ministers   
 come from Switzerland, &c— Worship conducted henceforward in   
 French.

A whole century nearly passed away between the   
trampling out of the Protestant Church in Calabria,   
and the next great persecution which befel that venerable   
people whose tragic history we are recording. We can   
touch only the more prominent of the events which fill   
up the interval.   
 The war that La Trinita, so ingloriously for himself,   
had waged against the Waldenses, ended, as we have   
seen, in a treaty of peace, which was signed at Cavour on   
the 5th of June, 1561, between Philip of Savoy and the   
deputies of the Valleys. But though the cloud had   
rolled past, it had left numerous and affecting memorials   
of the desolation it had inflicted. The inhabitants de-   
scended from the mountains to exchange the weapons of   
war for the spade and the pruning-knife. With steps   
slow and feeble the aged and the infirm were let down   
into the vales, to sit once more at noon or at eve beneath   
the shadow of their vines and ancestral chestnut-trees.   
But, alas! how often did the tear of sorrow moisten the   
eye as it marked the desolation and ruin that deformed   
those scenes lately so fair and smiling! The fruit-bearing   
trees cut down; vineyard and corn-field marred; hamlets

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burned; villages, in some cases, a heap of ruins, all   
testified to the rage of the enemy who had invaded their   
land. Years must pass before these deep scars could be   
effaced, and the beauty of their Valleys restored. And   
there were yet tender griefs weighing upon them. How   
many were there who had lived under the same roof -tree   
with them, and joined night and morning in the same   
psalm, who would return no more!   
 Distress, bordering on famine, began to invade the   
Valleys. Seven months of incessant fighting had left   
them no time to cultivate the fields; and now the stock   
of last year's provisions was exhausted, and starvation   
stared them in the face. Before the treaty of peace was   
signed, the time of sowing was past, and when the   
autumn came there was scarcely anything to reap. Their   
destitution was further aggravated by the fugitives from   
Calabria, who began about this time to arrive in the   
Valleys. Escaping with nothing but their lives, they   
presented themselves in hunger and nakedness. Their   
brethren opened their arms to receive them, and though   
their own necessities were great, they nevertheless shared   
with them the little they had.   
 The tale of the suffering now prevailing in the   
Valleys was known in other countries, and evoked the   
sympathy of their Protestant brethren. Calvin, with   
characteristic promptness and ardour, led in the move-   
ment for their relief. By his advice they sent deputies   
to represent their case to the Churches of Protestantism   
abroad, and collections were made for them in Geneva,   
France, Switzerland, and Germany. The subscriptions   
were headed by the Elector Palatine, after whom came   
the Duke of Wurtemburg, the Canton of Bern, the   
Church at Strasburg, and others.   
 By-and-by, seed-time and harvest were restored in   
the Valleys; smiling chalets began again to dot the   
sides of their mountains, and to rise by the banks of   
their torrents; and the miseries which La Trinita's

FRESH TROUBLES FOR THE VAUDOIS. 125   
  
campaign had entailed upon them were passing into   
oblivion, when their vexations were renewed by the   
appointment of a deputy-governor of their Valleys,   
Castrocaro, a Tuscan by birth.   
 This man had served against the Vaudois as a colonel   
of militia under La Trinita; he had been taken prisoner   
in an encounter with them, but honourably treated, and   
at length generously released. He returned the Wal-   
denses evil for good. His appointment as Governor of   
the Valleys he owed mainly to his acquaintance with the   
Duchess Margaret, the protectress of the Vaudois, into   
whose favour he had ingratiated himself by professing a   
warm affection for the men of the Valleys; and his   
friendship with the Archbishop of Turin, to whom he   
had pledged himself to do his utmost to convert the   
Vaudois to Romanism. When at length Castrocaro   
arrived in the Valleys in the character of governor, he   
forgot his professions to the duchess, but faithfully set   
about fulfilling the promise he had made to the arch-   
bishop.   
 The new governor began by restricting the liberties   
guaranteed to their Churches in the treaty of peace; he   
next ordered the dismissal of certain of the pastors, and   
when their congregations refused to comply, he began to   
fine and imprison the recusants. He sent false and   
calumnious reports to the court of the duke, and intro-   
duced a troop of soldiers into the country, on the pretext   
that the Waldenses were breaking out into rebellion.   
He built the fortress of Mirabouc, at the foot of the Col   
de la Croix, in the narrow gorge that leads from Bobbio   
to France, to close this gate of exit from their terri-   
tory, and overawe the Valley of Lucerna. At last he   
threatened to renew the war unless the Waldenses should   
comply with his wishes.   
 What was to be done? They carried their com-   
plaints and remonstrances to Turin; but, alas! the   
ear of the duke and duchess had been poisoned by

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the malice and craft of the governor. Soon again   
the old alternative would be presented to them, the   
mass or death.\*   
 In their extremity they sought the help of the   
Protestant princes of Germany. The cry from the Alps   
found a responsive echo from the German plains. The   
great Protestant chiefs of the Fatherland, especially   
Frederick, Elector Palatine, saw in these poor oppressed   
herdsmen and vine-dressers his brethren, and with zeal   
and warmth espoused their cause. He indited a letter   
to the duke, distinguished for its elevation of sentiment,   
as well as the catholicity of its views. It is a noble   
defence of the rights of conscience, and an eloquent   
pleading in behalf of toleration. "Let your highness,"   
says the Elector, "know that there is a God in heaven,   
who not only contemplates the actions, but also tries the   
hearts and reins of men, and from whom nothing is hid.   
Let your highness take care not voluntarily to make war   
upon God, and not to persecute Christ in bis members.   
. . . . Persecution, moreover, will never advance   
the cause it pretends to defend. The ashes of the   
martyrs are the seed of the Christian Church. For the   
Church resembles the palm-tree, whose stem only shoots   
up the taller the greater the weights that are hung upon   
it. Let your highness consider that the Christian re-   
ligion was established by persuasion, and not by vio-   
lence; and as it is certain that religion is nothing else   
than a firm and enlightened persuasion of God, and of   
his will, as revealed in his Word, and engraven in the   
hearts of believers by his Holy Spirit, it cannot, when   
once rooted, be torn away by tortures."§ So did the   
Elector Palatine warn the duke.   
 These are remarkable words when we think that   
they were written in the middle of the sixteenth century.   
We question whether our own age could express itself   
  
\* Muston, chap. 16. Monastier, chap. 21.   
§ See the letter in full in Leger, part i., pp. 41 — 5.   
  
 THE TRAITOR’S DEATH 127   
  
more justly on the subject of the rights of conscience,   
the spirituality of religion, and the impolicy, as well as   
criminality, of persecution. We sometimes apologise   
for the cruel deeds of Spain and France, on the ground   
of the intolerance and blindness of the age. But six   
years before the St. Bartholomew Massacre was enacted,   
this great voice had been raised in Christendom for   
toleration.   
 What effect this letter had upon the duke we do not   
certainly know, but from about this time Castrocaro   
moderated his violence, though he still continued at in-   
tervals to terrify the poor people he so basely oppressed   
by fulminating against them the most atrocious threats.   
On the death of Emanuel Philibert, in 1580, the villainy   
of the governor came to light. The young Duke Charles   
Emanuel ordered his arrest; but the execution of it was   
a matter of difficulty, for Castrocaro had entrenched him-   
self in the Castle of La Torre, and surrounded himself   
with a band of desperadoes, to which he had added, for   
his yet greater defence, a pack of ferocious bloodhounds   
of unusual size and strength.\* A captain of his guard   
betrayed him, and thus as he had maintained himself by   
treachery, so by treachery did his doom at last overtake   
him. He was carried to Turin, where he perished in   
prison.§   
 Famine, persecution, war — all three, sometimes in   
succession and sometimes together — had afflicted this   
much-enduring people, but now they were to be visited   
by pestilence. For some years they had enjoyed an   
unusual peace; and this quiet was the more remarkable   
inasmuch as all around their mountains Europe was in   
combustion. Their brethren of the Reformed Church in   
France, in Spain, and in Italy were falling on the field,   
perishing by massacre, or dying at the stake, while they   
were guarded from harm. But now a new calamity   
carried gloom and mourning into their Valleys. On   
  
\* Muston, p. 98. § Monastier, p. 222.   
  
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the morning of the 23rd of August, 1629, a cloud of   
unusual blackness gathered on the summit of the Col   
Julien. It burst in a water-spout or deluge. The   
torrents rolled down the mountain on both sides, and   
the villages of Bobbio and Prali, situated the one in the   
southern and the other in the northern valley, were   
overflown by the sudden inundation. Many of the   
houses were swept away, and the inhabitants had barely   
time to save their lives by flight. In September of the   
same year, there came an icy wind, accompanied by a   
dry cloud, which scathed their Valleys and destroyed   
the crop of the chestnut-tree. There followed a second   
deluge of rain, which completely ruined the vintage.   
These calamities were the more grievous inasmuch as   
they succeeded a year of partial famine. The Vaudois   
pastors assembled in solemn synod, to humble themselves   
and to lift up their voices in prayer to God. Little did   
they imagine that at that moment a still heavier calamity   
hung over them, and that this was the last time they   
were ever to meet one another on earth.\*   
 In 1630, a French army, under Marshal Schomberg,   
suddenly occupied the Valleys. In that army were   
many volunteers, who had made their escape from a   
virulent contagious disease then raging in France. The   
weather was hot, and the seeds of the pestilence which   
the army had brought with it speedily developed them-   
selves. The plague showed itself in the first week of   
May in the Valley of Perosaj it next broke out in the   
more northern Valley of San Martino; and soon it spread   
throughout all the Valleys. The pastors met together   
to supplicate the Almighty, and to concert practical   
measures for checking the ravages of this mysterious   
and terrible scourge. They purchased medicine and   
collected provisions for the poor.f They visited the   
sick, consoled the dying, and preached in the open air to   
crowds, solemnised and eager to listen.   
  
\* Muston, p. 111. § Monastier, p. 241.



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In July and August the heat was excessive, and the   
malady raged yet more furiously. In the month of   
July four of the pastors were carried off hy the plague;   
in August seven others died; and in the following   
month another, the twelfth, was mortally stricken.   
There remained now only three pastors, and it was   
remarked that they belonged to three several valleys —   
Lucerna, Martino, and Perosa. The three survivors met   
on the heights of Angrogna, to consult with the deputies   
of the various parishes regarding the means of providing   
for the celebration of worship. They wrote to Geneva   
and Dauphine requesting that pastors might be sent to   
supply the place of those whom the plague had struck   
down, that so the venerable Church of the Valleys, which   
had survived so many calamities, might not become ex-   
tinct. They also recalled Antoine Leger from Constantinople.\*   
 The plague subsided during the winter, but in spring   
(1631) it rose up again in renewed force. Of the three   
surviving pastors, one other died; leaving thus only   
two, Pierre Gilles of Lucerna, and Valerius Gross of   
Martino. With the heats of the summer the pestilence   
waxed in strength. Armies, going and coming in the   
Valleys, suffered equally with the inhabitants. Horse-   
men would be seen to drop from the saddle on the high-   
way, seized with sudden illness. Soldiers and sutlers,   
struck in by-paths, lay there infecting the air with their   
corpses. In La Torre alone fifty families became ex-   
tinct. The most moderate estimate of the numbers cut   
off by the plague is 10,000, or from a half to two-thirds   
of the entire population of the Valleys. The corn in   
many places remained uncut, the grapes rotted on the   
bough, and the fruit dropped from the tree. Strangers   
who had come to find health in the pure mountain air   
  
\* Muston, pp. 112 — 3. Antoine Logcr was uncle of Leger the   
historian. He had been tutor for many years in the family of the   
Ambassador of Holland at Constantinople.

RAVAGES OF THE PLAGUE AMONG THE VAUDOIS. 131

obtained from the soil nothing but a grave. Towns and   
villages, which had rung so recently from the sounds of   
industry, were now silent. Parents were without children,   
and children were without parents. Patriarchs, who had   
been wont with pride and joy to gather round them   
their numerous grandchildren, had seen them sicken   
and die, and were now alone. The venerable pastor   
Gilles lost his four elder sons. Though continually   
present in the homes of the stricken, and at the bed-   
sides of the dying, he himself was spared to compile the   
monuments of his ancient Church, and narrate among   
other woes that which had just passed over his native   
land, and "part of which he had been."   
 Of the Vaudois pastors only two now remained; and   
ministers hastened from Geneva and other places to the   
Valleys, lest the old lamp should go out. The services   
of the Waldensian Churches had hitherto been performed   
in the Italian tongue, but the new pastors could speak   
only French. Worship was henceforward conducted in   
that language, but the Vaudois soon came to understand   
it, their own ancient tongue being a dialect between the   
French and Italian. Another change introduced at this   
time was the assimilation of their ritual to that of   
Geneva. And further, the primitive and affectionate   
name of Barba was dropped, and the modern title sub-   
stituted, Monsieur le Ministre.\*   
  
\* Monastier, chap. 18. Muston pp. 242-3.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT MASSACRE.

Preliminary Attacks— The Propaganda de Fide — Marchioness de Pianeza   
 — Gastaldo's Order — Its Barbarous Execution — Greater Sorrows — Per-   
 fidy of Pianeza— The Massacring Army— Its Attack and Repulse —   
 Treachery— The Massacre Begins — Its Horrors— Modes of Torture-   
 Individual Martyrs— Leger collects Evidence on the Spot— He Appeals   
 to the Protestant States — Interposition of Cromwell— Mission of Sir   
 Samuel Morland— A Martyr's Monument.

The first labour of trie Waldenses, on the departure of   
the plague, was the re-organisation of society. There   
was not a house in all their Valleys where death had not   
been; all ties had been rent, the family was all but   
extinct; but now, the destroyer being gone, the scattered   
inhabitants began to draw together, and to join hand and   
heart in restoring the ruined churches, raising up the   
fallen habitations, and creating anew family and home.   
 Other events of an auspicious kind, which occurred   
at this time, contributed to revive the spirits of the   
Waldenses, and to brighten with a gleam of hope the   
scene of the recent great catastrophe. The army took   
its departure, peace having been signed between the   
French monarch and the duke, and the Valleys returned   
once more under the dominion of the House of Savoy.   
A decade and a half of comparative tranquillity allowed   
the population to root itself anew, and their Valleys and   
mountain-sides to be brought again under tillage. Fif-   
teen years — how short a breathing-space amid storms so   
awful!   
 These fifteen years draw to a close; it is now 1650,   
and the Vaudois are entering within the shadow of their

A TRUE DAUGHTER OF THE MEDICI. 133   
  
greatest woe. The throne of Savoy was at this time   
filled by Charles Emmanuel II., a youth of fifteen. He   
was a prince of mild and humane disposition; hut he   
was counselled and ruled by his mother, the Duchess   
Christina, who had been appointed regent of the kingdom   
during his minority. That mother was sprung of a race   
which has ever been noted for its dissimulation, its   
cruelty, and its bigoted devotion to Rome. She was   
the daughter of Henry IV. and Mary de Medici, and   
granddaughter of that Catherine de Medici whose name   
stands so conspicuously connected with a tragedy which   
has received, as it merited, the execration of mankind —   
the St. Bartholomew Massacre. The ferocious temper   
and gloomy superstition of the grandmother had de-   
scended to the granddaughter. In no reign did the   
tears and blood of the "Waldenses flow so profusely, a   
fact for which we cannot satisfactorily account, unless   
on the supposition that the sufferings which now over-   
whelmed them came not from the mild prince who   
occupied the throne, but from the cold, cruel, and blood-   
thirsty regent who governed the kingdom. In short,   
there is reason to believe that it was not the facile spirit   
of ,the House of Savoy, but the astute spirit of the   
Medici, prompted by the Vatican, that enacted those   
scenes of carnage that we are now to record.   
 The blow did not descend all at once; a series of   
lesser attacks heralded the great and consummating   
stroke. Machinations, chicaneries, and legal robberies   
paved the way for an extermination that was meant to   
be complete and final.   
 First of all came the monks. Pestilence, as we   
have seen, visited the Valleys in 1630. There came,   
however, a second plague — not this time the pestilence,   
but a swarm of Capuchins. They had been sent to con-   
vert the heretics, and they began by eagerly challenging   
the pastors to a controversy, in which they felt sure of   
triumphing. A few attempts, however, convinced them

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that victory was not to be so easily won as they had fondly   
thought. The heretics made "a Pope of their Bible, "   
they complained, and as this was a book which the   
Fathers had not studied, they did not know where to   
find the passages which they were sure would confute the   
Vaudois pastors; they could silence them only by   
banishing them, and among others whom they drove   
into exile was the accomplished Antoine Leger, the   
uncle of the historian. Thus were the people deprived   
of their natural leaders.\* The Vaudois were forbidden   
on pain of confiscation and death to purchase or farm   
lands outside their own narrow territories. Certain of   
their churches were closed. Their territory was con-   
verted into a prison by an order forbidding them to   
cross the frontier even for a few hours, unless on fair-   
days. The wholly Protestant communes of Bobbio,   
Villaro, Angrogna, and Bora were ordered to maintain   
each a mission of Capuchins; and foreign Protestants   
were interdicted from settling in the Valleys under pain   
of death, and a fine of 1,000 gold crowns upon the   
communes that should receive them. This law was   
levelled against their pastors, who, since the plague,   
were mostly French or Swiss. It was hoped that in a   
few years the Vaudois would be without ministers.   
Monts-de-Piete were established to induce the Vaudois,   
whom confiscations, bad harvests, and the billeting of   
soldiers had reduced to great straits, to pawn their goods,   
and when all had been put in pledge they were offered   
restitution in full on condition of renouncing their faith.   
Dowries were promised to young maidens on the same   
terms.§ These various arts had a success surprisingly   
small. Some dozen of Waldensian perverts were added   
to the Boman Church. It was plain that the good work   
of proselytising was proceeding too slowly. More   
efficient measures must be had recourse to.   
 The Society for the "Propagation of the Faith."   
  
\* Muston, p. 126. § Muston, p. 129.

"PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH." 135   
  
established by Pope Gregory XV. in 1622, had already   
been spread over Italy and France. The object of the   
society was originally set forth in words sufficiently   
simple and innocent—"De Propaganda Fide" (for the   
Propagation of the Faith). Since the first institution   
of this society, however, its object had undergone en-   
largement, or, if not its object, at all events its title.   
Its first modern designation was supplemented by the   
emphatic words, "et Extirpandis Haereticis " (and the   
Extirpation of Heretics). The membership of the society   
soon became numerous: it included both laymen and   
priests ; all ranks, from the noble and the prelate to the   
peasant and the pauper, pressed forward to enrol them-   
selves in it — the inducement being a plenary indulgence   
to all who should take part in the good work so unmis-   
takably indicated in the one brief and pithy clause, "et   
Extirpandis Haereticis." The societies in the smaller   
towns reported to the metropolitan cities ; the metro-   
politan cities to the capital; and the capitals to Rome,   
where, in the words of Leger, "sat the great spider that   
held the threads of this mighty web."   
 In 1650 the "Council of the Propagation of the   
Faith" was established at Turin. The chief councillors   
of state, the great lords of the country, and the digni-   
taries of the Church enrolled themselves as a presiding   
board. Societies of women were formed, at the head of   
which was the Marchioness de Pianeza. She was the   
first lady at court; and as she had not worn "the white   
rose of a blameless life," she was all the more zealous in   
this cause, in the hope of making expiation for the errors   
of the past. She was at infinite pains to further the   
object of the society; and her own eager spirit she   
infused into all under her. "The lady propagandists,"   
says Leger,\* "distributed the towns into districts, and   
each visited the district assigned to her twice a week,   
suborning simple girls, servant maids, and young chil-   
  
\* Leger, part ii., chap. 6, pp. 72-3.

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dren by their flattering allurements and fair promises,   
and doing evil turns to such as would not listen to them.   
They had their spies everywhere, who, among other   
information, ascertained in what Protestant families dis-   
agreement existed, and hither would the propagandists   
repair, stirring up the flame of dissension in order to   
separate the husband from the wife, the wife from the   
husband, the children from the parents; promising them,   
and indeed giving them, great advantages, if they would   
consent to attend mass. Did they hear of a tradesman   
whose business was falling off, or of a gentleman who   
from gambling or otherwise was in want of money, these   
ladies were at hand with their *Dabo tibi* (I will give   
thee), on condition of apostacy; and the prisoner was in   
like manner relieved from his dungeon, who would give   
himself up to them. To meet the very heavy expenses   
of this proselytising, to keep the machinery at work, to   
purchase the souls that sold themselves for bread, regular   
collections were made in the chapels, and in private   
families, in the shops, in the inns, in the gambling-   
houses, in the streets — everywhere was alms-begging in   
operation. The Marchioness of Pianeza herself, great   
lady as she was, used every second or third day to make   
a circuit in search of subscriptions, even going into the   
taverns for that purpose If any person of   
condition, who was believed able to contribute a coin,   
chanced to arrive at any hotel in town, these ladies did   
not fail to wait upon him, purse in hand, and solicit a   
donation. "When persons of substance known to belong   
to the religion [Reformed] arrived in Turin, they did   
not scruple to ask money of them for the propagation of   
the faith, and the influence of the marchioness, or fear   
of losing their errand and ruining their affairs, would   
often induce such to comply."   
 While busied in the prosecution of these schemes the   
Marchioness de Pianeza was stricken with death. Feel-   
ing remorse, and wishing to make atonement, she sum-   
  
 THE ORDER TO QUIT. 137   
  
moned her lord, from whom she had heen parted many-   
years, to her bedside, and charged him, as he valued the   
repose of her soul and the safety of his own, to continue   
the good work, on which her heart had been so much   
set, of converting the Vaudois. To stimulate his zeal,   
she bequeathed him a sum of money, which, however,   
he could not touch till he had fulfilled the condition on   
which it was granted. The marquis undertook the task   
with the utmost goodwill.\* A bigot and a soldier, he   
could think of only one way of converting the Vaudois.   
It was now that the storm burst.   
 On the 25th of January, 1655, came the famous   
order of Gastaldo. This decree commanded all the Vau-   
dois families domiciled in the communes of Lucerna,   
Fenile, Bubiana, Bricherasio, San Giovanni, and La   
Torre — in short, the whole of that rich district that   
separates their capital from the plain of Piedmont — to   
quit their dwellings within three days, and retire into   
the Valleys of Bobbio, Angrogna, and Rora. This they   
were to do on pain of death. They were further required   
to sell their lands to Romanists within twenty days.   
Those who were willing to abjure the Protestant faith   
were exempted from the decree.   
 Anything more inhuman and barbarous under the   
circumstances than this edict it would not be easy to   
imagine. It was the depth of winter, and an Alpine   
winter has terrors unknown to the winters of even more   
northern regions. How ever could a population like that   
on which the decree fell, including young children and   
old men, the sick and bed-ridden, the blind and the   
lame, undertake a journey across swollen rivers, through   
valleys buried in snow, and over mountains covered with   
ice? They must inevitably perish, and the edict that   
cast them out was but another form of condemning them   
to die of cold and hunger. "Pray ye" said Christ,   
when warning his disciples to flee when they should see   
  
\* Muston, p. 130.

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the Roman armies gathering round Jerusalem, "pray ye   
that your flight be not in the winter." The Romish   
Propaganda at Turin chose this season for the enforced   
flight of the Vaudois. Cold were the icy peaks that   
looked down on this miserable troop, who were now   
fording the torrents and now struggling up the mountain   
tracks; but the heart of the persecutor was colder still.   
True, an alternative was offered them; they might go   
to mass. Did they avail themselves of it? The historian   
Leger informs us that he had a congregation of well-   
nigh 2,000 persons, and that not a man of them all   
accepted the alternative. "I can well bear them this   
testimony," he observes, " seeing I was their pastor for   
eleven years, and I knew every one of them by name;   
judge, reader, whether I had not cause to weep for joy,   
as well as for sorrow, when I saw that all the fury of   
these wolves was not able to influence one of these lambs,   
and that no earthly advantage could shake their con-   
stancy. And when I marked the traces of their blood   
on the snow and ice over which they had dragged their   
lacerated limbs, had I not cause to bless God that I had   
seen accomplished in their poor bodies what remained of   
the measure of the sufferings of Christ, and especially   
when I beheld this heavy cross borne by them with a   
fortitude so noble?"\*   
 The Vaudois of the other valleys welcomed these   
poor exiles, and joyfully shared with them their own   
humble and scanty fare. They spread the table for   
all, and loaded it with polenta and roasted chestnuts,   
with the milk and butter of their mountains, to which   
they did not forget to add a cup of that red wine which   
their valleys produce.§ Their enemies were amazed   
when they saw the whole community rise up as one man   
and depart.   
 Greater woes trod fast upon the heels of this initial   
calamity. A part only of the Vaudois nation had   
  
\* Leger, part, ii., chap. 8, p. 94. § Monastier, p. 266.

THE MARQUIS DE PIANEZA AT LA TORRE. 139   
  
suffered from the cruel decree of Gastaldo; but the   
fixed object of the Propaganda was the extirpation of   
the entire race, and the matter was gone about with con-   
summate perfidy and deliberate cruelty. From the upper   
valleys, to which they had retired, the Waldenses sent   
respectful representations to the court of Turin. They   
described their piteous condition in terms so moving —   
and it would have been hard to have exaggerated it —   
and besought the fulfilment of treaties in which the   
honour and truth of the House of Savoy were pledged, in   
language so temperate and just, that one would have   
thought that their supplication must needs prevail. Alas,   
no! The ear of their prince had been poisoned by false-   
hood. Even access to him was denied them. As re-   
garded the Propaganda, their remonstrances, though   
accompanied with tears and groans, were wholly un-   
heeded. The Vaudois were but charming deaf adders.   
They were put off with equivocal answers and delusive   
promises till the fatal 17th of April had arrived, when it   
was no longer necessary to dissemble and equivocate.\*   
 On the day above named, April 17th, 1655, the   
Marquis de Pianeza departed secretly at midnight from   
Turin, and appeared before the Valleys at the head of an   
army of 15,000 men.§ Waldensian deputies were by   
appointment knocking at the door of the marquis in   
Turin, while he himself was on the road to La Torre.   
He appeared under the walls of that town at eight   
o'clock on Saturday evening, the same 17th of April,   
attended by about 300 men; the main body of his   
army he had left encamped on the plain. That army,   
secretly prepared, was composed of Piedmontese, com-   
prising a good many banditti, who were promised   
pardon and plunder should they behave themselves well,   
some companies of Bavarians, six regiments of French,   
whose thirst for blood the Huguenot wars had not been   
able to slake, and several companies of Irish Romanists,   
  
\* Leger, part ii., pp. 95 — 6. § Ibid, part iv., p. 108.

140 THE WALDENSES.   
  
who, banished by Cromwell, arrived in Piedmont dripping 1   
from the massacre of their Protestant fellow-subjects   
in their native land.\*   
 The Waldenses had hastily constructed a barricade   
at the entrance of La Torre. The marquis ordered   
his soldiers to storm it ; but the besieged resisted so   
stoutly that, after three hours' fighting, the enemy   
found he had made no advance. At one o'clock on   
the Sunday morning, Count Amadeus of Lucerna, who   
knew the locality, made a flank movement along the   
banks of the Pelice, stole silently through the meadows   
and orchards, and, advancing from the opposite quarter,   
attacked the Vaudois in the rear. They faced round,   
pierced the ranks of their assailants, and made good their   
retreat to the hills, leaving La Torre in the hands of the   
enemy. The Vaudois had lost only three men in all that   
fighting. It was now between two and three o'clock on   
Sunday morning, and though the hour was early, the   
Romanists repaired in a body to the church and chanted   
a Te Deum.f The day was Palm-Sunday, and in this   
fashion did the Roman Church, by her soldiers, celebrate   
that great festival of love and goodwill in the Walden-   
sian Valleys.   
 The Vaudois were once more on their mountains.   
Their families had been previously transported to their   
natural fastnesses. Their sentinels kept watch night   
and day along the frontier heights. They could see the   
movements of Pianeza's army on the plains beneath.   
They beheld their orchards falling by the axes, and their   
dwellings being consumed by the torches of the soldiers.   
On Monday the 19th, and Tuesday the 20th, a series   
of skirmishes took place along the line of their mountain   
passes and forts. The Vaudois, though poorly armed   
and vastly outnumbered — for they were but as one   
to a hundred — were victorious on all points. The   
Popish soldiers fell back in ignominious rout, carrying   
  
\* Monastier, p. 267. § Muston, p. 135.

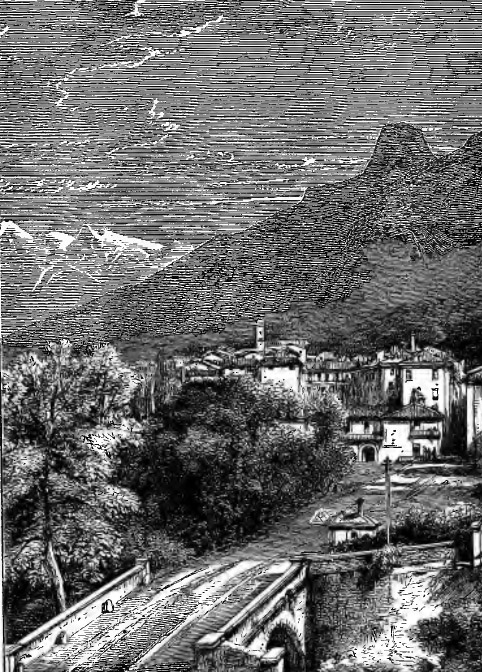
THE CRAFTY MARQUIS AND THE SIMPLE VAUDOIS. 141

wondrous tales of the Vaudois' valour and heroism to   
their comrades on the plain, and infusing incipient panic   
into the camp.\*   
 Guilt is ever cowardly. Pianeza now began to have   
misgivings touching the issue. The recollection that   
mighty armies had aforetime perished on these moun-   
tains haunted and disquieted him. He betook him to   
a weapon which the Waldenses have ever been less able   
to cope with than the sword. On Wednesday, the 21st,   
before daybreak, he announced, by sound of trumpet at   
the various Vaudois entrenchments, his willingness to   
receive their deputies and treat for peace. Delegates set   
out for his camp, and on their arrival at head-quarters   
were received with the utmost urbanity, and sumptuously   
entertained. Pianeza expressed the utmost regret for   
the excesses his soldiers had committed, and which had   
been done, he said, contrary to orders. He protested   
that he had come into their valleys only to track a few   
fugitives who had disobeyed Gastaldo's order, that the   
higher communes had nothing to fear, and that if they   
would admit a single regiment each for a few days, in   
token of their loyalty, all would be amicably ended. The   
craft of the man conquered the deputies, and despite   
the warnings of the more sagacious, the pastor Leger   
in particular, the Waldensps opened the passes of their   
valleys and the doors of their dwellings to the soldiers of   
Pianeza.   
 Alas! alas! these poor people were undone. They   
had received under their roof the murderers of them-   
selves and their families. The first two days, the 22nd   
and 23rd of April, were passed in comparative peace, the   
soldiers eating at the same table, sleeping under the same   
roof, and conversing freely with their destined victims.   
This interval was needed to allow every preparation to   
be made for what was to follow. The enemy now oc-   
cupied the towns, the villages, the cottages, and the   
  
\* Leger, part ii., pp. 108-9.

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roads throughout the valleys. They hung upon the   
heights. Two great passes led into France: the one   
over the snows of the lofty Col Julien, and the other by   
the Valley of Queyras into Dauphine. But, alas! escape   
was not possible by either outlet. No one could traverse   
the Col Julien at this season and live, and the fortress   
of Mirabouc, that guarded the narrow gorge which led   
into the Valley of Queyras, the enemy had been careful   
to secure.\* The Vaudois were enclosed as in a net —   
shut in as in a prison.   
 At last the blow fell with the sudden crash of the   
thunderbolt. At four o'clock on the morning of Satur-   
day, the 24th of April, 1655, the signal was given from   
the castle-hill of La Torre.§ But who shall rehearse the   
tragedy that followed? "It is Cain a second time,'' says   
Monastier, "shedding the blood of his brother Abel."₸   
On the instant a thousand assassins began. the work of   
death. Dismay, horror, agony, woe in a moment over-   
spread the Valleys of Lucerna and Angrogna. Though   
Pandemonium had sent forth its fiends to riot in crime   
and revel in blood, they could not have outdone the   
soldiers of the Propaganda. Though the victims climbed   
the hills with what speed they could, the murderer was   
on their track. The torrents as they rolled down from   
the heights soon began to be tinged with blood. Gleams   
of lurid light burst out through the dark smoke that was   
rolling through the vales, for a priest and monk accom-   
panied each party of soldiers, to set fire to the houses as   
soon as the inmates had been dispatched. Alas! what   
sounds are those that repeatedly strike the ear? The   
cries and groans of the dying were echoed and re-echoed   
from the rocks around, and it seemed as if the mountains   
had taken up a wailing for the slaughter of their chil-   
dren. "Our Valley of Lucerna," exclaims Leger, "which   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 110.   
§ So says Leger, who was an eye-witness of these horrors.   
₸ Monaster, p. 270.

ATROCITIES OF THE PIEDMONTESE MASSACRES. 143   
  
was like a Goshen, was now converted into a Mount   
Etna, darting forth cinders and fire and flames. The   
earth resembled a furnace, and the air was filled with a   
darkness like that of Egypt, which might be felt, from   
the smoke of towns, villages, temples, mansions, granges,   
and buildings, all burning in the flames of the Vatican."\*   
 The soldiers were not content with the quick dispatch   
of the sword, they invented new and hitherto unheard-of   
modes of torture and death. No man at this day dare   
write in plain words all the disgusting and horrible deeds   
of these men; their wickedness can never be all known,   
because it never can be all told.   
 From the awful narration of Leger, we select only a   
few instances; but even these few, however mildly stated,   
grow, without our intending it, into a group of horrors.   
Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers,   
clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against   
the rocks; or were held between two soldiers and their   
quivering limbs torn up by main force. Their mangled   
bodies were then thrown on the highways or fields, to be   
devoured by beasts. The sick and the aged were burned   
alive in their dwellings. Some had their hands and   
arms and legs lopped off, and fire applied to the severed   
parts to staunch the bleeding and prolong their suffering.   
Some were flayed alive, some were roasted alive, some   
disembowelled; or tied to trees in their own orchards,   
and their hearts cut out. Some were horribly mutilated,   
and of others the brains were boiled and eaten by these   
cannibals. Some were fastened down into the furrows   
of their own fields, and ploughed into the soil as men   
plough manure into it. Others were buried alive. Fathers   
were marched to death with the heads of their sons sus-   
pended round their necks. Parents were compelled to   
look on while their children were first outraged, then   
massacred, before being themselves permitted to die. But   
here we must stop. We cannot proceed farther in Leger's   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 113.

144 THE WALDENSES.   
  
awful narration. There come vile, abominable, and mon-   
strous deeds, utterly and overwhelmingly disgusting,   
horrible and fiendish, which we dare not transcribe. The   
heart sickens, and the brain begins to swim. "My hand   
trembles,'' says Leger, "so that I scarce can hold the   
pen, and my tears mingle in torrents with my ink, while   
I write the deeds of these children of darkness — blacker   
even than the Prince of Darkness himself.''\*   
 No general account, however awful, can convey so   
correct an idea of the horrors of this persecution as would   
the history of individual cases; but this we are precluded   
from giving. Could we take these martyrs one by one   
— could we describe the tragical fate of Peter Simeon of   
Angrogna — the barbarous death of Magdalene, wife of   
Peter Pilon of Villaro — the sad story — but no, that story   
could not be told — of Anne, daughter of John Charbonier   
of La Torre — the cruel martyrdom of Paul Gamier of   
Rora, whose eyes were first plucked out, who next en-   
dured other horrible indignities, and, last of all, was   
flayed alive, and his skin, divided into four parts, ex-   
tended on the window gratings of the four principal   
houses in Lucerna — could we describe these cases, with   
hundreds of others equally horrible and appalling, our   
narrative would grow so harrowing that our readers,   
unable to proceed, would turn from the page. Literally   
did the Waldenses suffer all the things of which the   
apostle speaks, as endured by the martyrs of old, with   
other torments not then invented, or which the rage of   
even a Nero shrank from inflicting: — "They were stoned,   
they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with   
the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-   
skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the   
world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and   
in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth."  
 These cruelties form a scene that is unparalleled and   
unique in the history of at least civilised countries.   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 111.



THE ENTRANCE TO LA TORRE.   
  
  
  
146 THE WALDENSES.   
There have been tragedies in which more blood was   
spilt and more life sacrificed, but none in which the   
actors were so completely dehumanised, and the forms   
of suffering' so monstrously disgusting, so unutterably   
cruel and revolting. The Piedmontese Massacres in   
this respect stand alone. They are more fiendish   
than all the atrocities and murders before or since, and   
Leger may still advance his challenge to "all travellers,   
and all who have studied the history of ancient and   
modern pagans, whether among the Chinese, Tartars   
and Turks, they ever witnessed or heard tell of such   
execrable perfidies and barbarities.''   
 The authors of these deeds, thinking it may be that   
their very atrocity would make the world slow to believe   
them, made bold to deny that they had ever been done,   
even before the blood was well dry in the Valleys.   
Pastor Leger took instant and effectual means to de-   
monstrate the falsehood of that denial, and to provide   
that clear, irrefragable, and indubitable proof of these   
awful crimes should go down to posterity. He travelled   
from commune to commune, immediately after the   
massacre, attended by notaries, who took down the   
depositions and attestations of the survivors and eye-   
witnesses of these deeds, in presence of the council and   
consistory of the place.\* From the evidence of these   
witnesses he compiled and gave to the world a book,   
which Dr. Gilly truly characterised as one of the most   
" dreadful" in existence.§ The originals of these de-   
positions Leger gave to Sir Samuel Morland, who de-   
posited them, together with other valuable documents   
pertaining to the Waldenses, in the Library of the   
University of Cambridge.   
\* Leger, part ii., p. 112.   
§ The took is that from which we have so largely quoted, en-   
*titled Histoire Générale des Eglises Evangeliques des Vallées de Piemont   
ou Vaudoises*. Par Jean Leger, Pasteur et Moderateur des Eglises des   
Vallees, et depuis la violence de la Persecution, appele a l'Eglise   
"Wallonne de Leyde. A. Leyde, 1669.

THE VAUDOIS APPEAL TO EUROPE. 147   
  
Uncontrollable grief seized the hearts of the sur-   
vivors at the sight of their brethren slain, their country   
devastated, and their Church overthrown. "Oh that   
my head were waters," exclaims Leger, "and mine eyes   
a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for   
the slain of the daughter of my people I Behold and see   
if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." "It was   
then," he adds, "that the fugitives, who had been   
snatched as brands from the burning, could address God   
in the words of the 79th Psalm, which literally as   
emphatically describes their condition: —

"'God, the heathen are come into thine inheritances,   
 Thy holy temple have they defiled;   
 They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.   
 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given   
 To be meat unto the fowls of heaven,   
 The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth,   
 Their blood have they shed like water ; . . . .   
 And there was none to bury them!"\*

When the storm had abated, Leger assembled the   
scattered survivors, in order to take counsel with them   
as to the steps to be now taken. It does not surprise us   
to find that some had begun to entertain the idea of   
abandoning the Valleys altogether. Leger strongly dis-   
suaded them against the thought of forsaking their   
ancient inheritance. They must, he said, rebuild their   
Zion in the faith that the God of their fathers would   
not permit the Church of the Valleys to be finally   
overthrown. To encourage them, he undertook to lay a   
representation of their sufferings and broken condition   
before their brethren of other countries, who, he was   
sure, would hasten to their help at this great crisis.   
These counsels prevailed. "Our tears are no longer of   
water," so wrote the remnant of the slaughtered Vaudois   
to the Protestants of Europe, "they are of blood; they   
do not merely obscure our sight, they choke our very   
hearts. Our hands tremble and our heads ache by the   
\* Leger, part ii., p. 113.

148 THE WALDENSES.   
  
many blows we have received. "We cannot frame an   
epistle answerable to the intent of our minds, and the   
strangeness of our desolations. We pray you to excuse   
us, and to collect amid our groans the meaning of what   
we fain would utter." After this touching introduction,   
they proceeded with a representation of their state, ex-   
pressing themselves in terms the moderation of which   
contrasts strongly with the extent of their wrongs. Pro-   
testant Europe was horror-struck when it heard of the   
massacre.   
 Nowhere did these awful tidings awaken a deeper   
sympathy or kindle a stronger indignation than in Eng-   
land. Cromwell, who was then at the head of the State,   
proclaimed a fast, ordered a collection for the sufferers,\*   
and wrote to all the Protestant princes, and to the King   
of France, with the intent of enlisting their sympathy   
and aid in behalf of the Vaudois. One of the noblest   
as well as most sacred of the tasks ever undertaken by   
the great poet, who then acted as the Protector's Latin   
secretary, was the writing of these letters. Milton's pen   
was not less gloriously occupied when writing in behalf   
of these venerable sufferers for conscience'' sake, than   
when writing "Paradise Lost." In token of the deep   
interest he took in this affair, Cromwell sent Sir Samuel   
Morland with a letter to the Duke of Savoy, expressive   
of the astonishment and sorrow he felt at the barbarities   
which had been committed on those who were his breth-   
ren in the faith. Cromwell's ambassador visited the   
Valleys on his way to Turin, and saw with his own eyes   
the frightful spectacle which the region still presented.   
"If," said he, addressing the duke, the horrors he had   
just seen giving point to his eloquence, and kindling his   
republican plainness into Puritan fervour, "If the tyrants   
  
\* The sum collected in England waB, in round numbers, £38,000.   
Of this, £16,000 was invested, on the security of the State, to pension   
pastors, schoolmasters, and students in the Valleys. This latter sum   
was appropriated by Charles II., on the pretext that he was not bound   
to implement the engagements of a usurper.

THE MARTYR’S MONUMENT. 149   
  
of all times and ages were alive again, they would doubt-   
less be ashamed to find that nothing barbarous nor   
inhuman, in comparison of these deeds, had ever been   
invented by them. In the meantime," he continued,   
"the angels are stricken with horror; men are dizzy   
with amazement; heaven itself appears astonished with   
the cries of the dying, and the very earth to blush with   
the gore of so many innocent persons. Avenge not thy-   
self, O God, for this mighty wickedness, this parricidal   
slaughter! Let thy blood, O Christ, wash out this   
blood!"\*   
 We have repeatedly mentioned the Castelluzzo in our   
narrative of this people and their many martyrdoms. It   
is closely connected with the Massacre of 1655, and as   
such kindled the muse of Milton. It stands at the   
entrance of the Valleys, its feet swathed in feathery   
woods ; above which is a mass of debris and fallen rocks,   
which countless tempests have gathered like a girdle   
round its middle. From amidst these the supreme column   
shoots up, pillar-like, and touches that white cloud which   
is floating past in mid-heaven. One can see a dark spot   
on the face of the cliff just below the crowning rocks of   
the summit. It would be taken for the shadow of a   
passing cloud upon the mountain, were it not that it is   
immovable. That is the mouth of a cave so roomy, it   
is said, as to be able to contain some hundreds. To this   
friendly chamber the Waldenses were wont to flee when   
the valley beneath was a perfect Pandemonium, glitter-   
ing with steel, red with crime, and ringing with execra-   
tions and blasphemies. To this cave many of the Vaudois   
fled on occasion of the great massacre. But, alas! thither   
  
\* The History of 'the Evangelical Chwches of the Valleys of Piedmont:   
containing a most exact Geographical Description of the place, and a   
faithful Account of the Doctrine, Life, and Persecutions of the ancient   
Inhabitants, together with a most naked and punctual Eelation of the   
late Moody Massacre, 1655. By Samuel Morland, Esq., His Highness'   
Commissioner Extraordinary for the Affairs of the said Valleys.   
London, 1658.   
  
  
150 THE WALDENSES.   
  
the persecutor tracked them, and dragging them forth   
rolled them down the awful precipice.   
 The law that indissolubly links great crimes with the   
spot where they were perpetrated, has written the Mas-   
sacre of 1655 on this mountain, and given it in eternal   
keeping to its rock. There is not another such martyrs'   
monument in the whole world. While the Castelluzzo   
stands the memory of this great crime cannot die; through   
all the ages it will continue to cry, and that cry our   
sublimest poet has interpreted in his sublime sonnet: —   
  
 "Avenge, Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose tones   
 Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;   
 Even them who kept Thy truth so pure of old,   
 When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,   
 Forget not: in Thy hook record their groans   
 "Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold   
 Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd   
 Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans   
 The vales redoubled to the hills, and they   
 To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow   
 O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway   
 The triple tyrant; that from these may grow   
 A hundredfold, who having learned Thy way,   
 Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

CHAPTER XIV.

EXPLOITS OP GIANAVELLO MASSACRE AND PILLAGE OF   
 RORA.

Ascent of La Combe— Beauty and Grandeur of Valley of Rora— Gianavello   
 — His Character — Marquis de Pianeza — His First Assault — Brave Re-   
 pulse—Treachery of the Marquis— No Faith with Heretics— Giana-   
 vello's Band— Repulse of Second and Third Attacks— Death of a   
 Persecutor— An Army raised to invade Rora— Massacre and Pillage —   
 Letter of Pianeza— Gianavello's Heroic Reply— Gianavello renews the   
 War— 500 against 15,000— Success of the Waldenses— Horror at the   
 Massacre— Interposition of England— Letter of Cromwell— Treaty of   
 Peace.

The next tragic episode in the history of the "Waldenses   
takes us to the Valley o£ Rora. The invasion and out-   
rages of which this valley became the scene were con-   
temporaneous with the horrors of the great massacre.   
In what we are now to relate, feats of heroism are   
blended with deeds of suffering, and we are called to   
admire the valour of the patriot, as well as the patience   
of the martyr.   
 The Valley of Rora lies on the left as one enters La   
Torre; it is separated from Lueerna by a barrier of   
mountains. Rora has two entrances : one by a side   
ravine, which branches off about two miles before reach-   
ing La Torre, and the other by crossing the Valley of   
Lueerna and climbing the mountains. This last is   
worthy of being briefly described. We start, let us   
sttppose, from the town of La Torre; we skirt the   
Castelluzzo on the right, which high in air hangs its   
precipices, with their many tragic memories, above us.   
From this point we turn to the left, descend into the   
valley, traverse its bright meadows, here shaded by the

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viae which stretches its arms in classic freedom from   
tree to tree. We cross the torrent of the Pelice by a   
small bridge, and hold on our way till we reach the foot   
of the mountains of La Combe, that wall in the Valley   
of Rora. We begin to climb by a winding path.   
Pasturage and vineyard give place to chestnut forest;   
the chestnut in its turn yields to the pine; and, as we   
mount still higher, we find ourselves amid the naked   
ledges of the mountain, with their gushing rills, mar-   
gined by moss or other Alpine herbage.   
 An ascent of two hours brings us to the summit of   
the pass. We have here a pedestal, some 4,000 feet in   
height, in the midst of a stupendous amphitheatre of   
Alps, from which to view their glories. How profoundly   
deep the valley from which we have just climbed up!   
A thread of silver is now the Pelice; a patch of green a   
few inches square is now the meadow; the chestnut-tree   
is a mere dot, hardly visible; and yonder are La Torre   
and the white Villaro, so tiny that they look as if they   
could be packed into a child's toy-box.   
 But while all else has diminished, the mountains   
seem to have enlarged their bulk and increased their   
stature. High above us towers the summit of the   
Castelluzzo; still higher rise the rolling masses of the   
Vandalin, the lower slopes of which form a vast and   
magnificent hanging garden, utterly dwarfing those   
which were among the wonders of Babylon. And in   
the far distance the eye rests on a tumultuous sea of   
mountains, here rising in needles, there running off in   
long serrated ridges, and there standing up in massive   
peaks of naked granite, wearing the shining garments   
which winter weaves for the giants of the Alps.   
 We now descend into the Valley of Rora. It lies at   
our feet, a cup of verdure, some sixty miles in circum-   
ference, its sides and bottom variously clothed with   
corn-field and meadow, with vineyard and orchard, with   
the walnut, the cherry, and all fruit-bearing trees, from

CAPTAIN JOSHUA GIANAVELLO. 153   
  
amid which numerous brown châlets peep out. The   
great mountains sweep round the valley like a wall, and   
among them, pre-eminent in glory as in stature, stands   
the monarch of the Cottian Alps — Monte Viso.   
 As among the Jews of old, so among the Waldenses,   
God raised up, from time to time, mighty men of valour   
to deliver his people. One of the most remarkable of   
these men was Gianavello, commonly known as Captain   
Joshua Gianavello, a native of this same Valley of Rora.   
He appears, from the accounts that have come down to   
us, to have possessed all the qualities of a great military   
leader. He was a man of daring courage, of resolute   
purpose, and of venturous enterprise. He had the   
faculty, so essential in a commander, of skilful com-   
bination. He was fertile in resource, and self-possessed   
in emergencies; he was quick to resolve, and prompt to   
execute. His devotion and energy were the means,   
under God, of mitigating somewhat the horrors of the   
Massacre of 1655, and his heroism ultimately rolled   
back the tide of that great calamity, and made it recoil   
upon its authors. It was the morning of the 24th of   
April, 1655, the day which saw the butchery commenced   
that we have described above. On that same day 500   
soldiers were dispatched by the Marquis de Pianeza to   
the Valley of Rora, to massacre its unoffending and un-   
suspecting inhabitants. Ascending from the Valley of   
the Pelice, they had gained the summit of the pass, and   
were already descending on the town of Rora, stealthily   
and swiftly, as a herd of wolves might descend upon a   
sheep-fold, or as, says Leger, "a brood of vultures might   
descend upon a flock of harmless doves." Happily   
Gianavello, who had known for weeks before that a   
storm was gathering, though he knew not when or   
where it would burst, was on the outlook. He saw the   
troop, and guessed their errand. There was not a   
moment to be lost; a little longer, and not a man   
would be left alive in Rora to carry tidings of its fate to

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the next commune. But was Gianavello single-handed   
to attack an army of 500 men? He stole up-hill, under   
cover of the rocks and trees, and on his way he prevailed   
on six peasants, brave men like himself, to join him in   
repelling the invaders. The heroic little band marched   
on till they were near the troop, then hiding amid the   
bushes, they lay in ambush by the side of the path. The   
soldiers came on, little suspecting the trap into which   
they were marching. Gianavello and his men fired, and   
with so unerring an aim that seven of the troop fell dead.   
Then, reloading their pieces, and dexterously changing   
their ground, they fired again with a like effect. The   
attack was unexpected ; the foe was invisible; the   
frightened imaginations of Pianeza's soldiers multiplied   
tenfold the number of their assailants. They began to   
retreat. But Gianavello and his men, bounding from   
cover to cover like so many chamois, hung upon their   
rear, and did deadly execution with their bullets. The   
invaders left 54 of their number dead behind them ; and   
thus did these seven peasants chase from their Valley of   
Bora the 500 assassins who had come to murder its   
peaceful inhabitants.\*   
 That same afternoon the people of Rora, who were   
ignorant of the f earful murders which were at that very   
moment proceeding in the valleys of their brethren, re-   
paired to the Marquis de Pianeza to complain of the   
attack. The marquis affected ignorance of the whole   
affair. "Those who invaded your valley," said he, "were   
a set of banditti. You did right to repel them. Go back   
to your families and fear nothing; I pledge my word   
and honour that no evil shall happen to you."   
 These deceitful words did not impose upon Gianavello.   
He had a wholesome recollection of the maxim enacted   
by the Council of Constance, and so often put in practice   
in the Valleys, "No faith is to be kept with heretics."   
Pianeza, he knew, was the agent of the " Council of   
  
\* Leger, part ii., chap. 11, p. 186.

"ALL IS LOST, SAVE YOURSELVES!" 155   
  
Extirpation." Hardly had the next morning broken   
when the hero-peasant was abroad, scanning with eagle-   
eye the mountain paths that led into his valley. It was   
not long till his suspicions were more than justified.   
Six hundred men-at-arms, chosen with special reference   
to this difficult enterprise, were seen ascending the moun-   
tain Cassuleto, to do what their comrades of the previous   
day had failed to accomplish. Gianavello had now   
mustered a little host of eighteen, of whom twelve   
were armed with muskets and swords, and six with   
only the sling. These he divided into three parties,   
each consisting of four musketeers and two slingers, and   
he posted them in a defile, through which he saw the   
invaders must pass. No sooner had the van of the   
enemy entered the gorge than a shower of bullets and   
stones from invisible hands saluted them. Every bullet   
and stone did its work. The first discharge brought   
down an officer and twelve men. That volley was   
succeeded by others equally fatal. The cry was   
raised, "All is lost, save yourselves!" The flight was   
precipitate, for every bush and rock seemed to vomit forth   
deadly missiles. Thus a second ignominious retreat rid   
the Valley of Rora of these murderers.   
 The inhabitants carried their complaints a second   
time to Pianeza. "Concealing,'' as Leger says, "the   
ferocity of the tiger under the skin of the fox/' he   
assured the deputies that the attack had been the result   
of a misunderstanding; that certain accusations had been   
lodged against them, the falsity of which had since been   
discovered, and now they might return to their homes,   
for they had nothing to fear. No sooner were they gone   
than Pianeza began vigorously to prepare for a third   
attack.\*   
 He organised a battalion of from 800 to 900 men.   
Next morning, this host made a rapid march on Bora,   
seized all the avenues leading into the valley, and   
  
\* Leger, part ii., pp. 186-7.

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chasing the inhabitants to the caves in Monte Friolante,   
set fire to their dwellings, having first plundered them.   
Captain Joshua Gianavello, at the head of his little   
troop; saw the enemy enter, but their numbers were so   
overwhelming that he waited a more favourable moment   
for attacking them. The soldiers were retiring, laden   
with their booty, and driving before them the cattle of   
the peasants. Gianavello knelt down before his hero-   
band, and giving thanks to God, who had twice by his   
hand saved his people, he prayed that the hearts and   
arms of his followers might be strengthened, to work   
yet another deliverance. He then attacked the foe.   
The spoilers turned and then fled up-hill, in the hope of   
escaping into the Valley of the Pelice, throwing away   
their booty in their flight. When they had gained the   
pass, and begun their descent, their flight became yet   
more disastrous; great stones, torn up and rolled after   
them, were mingled with the bullets, and did deadly   
execution upon them, while the precipices over which   
they fell in their haste consummated their destruction.   
The few who survived fled to Villaro.\*   
 The Marquis de Pianeza, instead of seeing in these   
events the finger of God, was only the more inflamed   
with rage, and the more resolutely bent on the extir-   
pation of every heretic from the Valley of Rora. He   
assembled all the royal troops then under his command,   
or which could be spared from the massacre in which   
they were occupied in the other valleys, in order to   
surround the little territory. This was now the fourth   
attack on the commune of Rora, but the invaders were   
destined once more to recoil before the shock of its heroic   
defenders. Some 8,000 men had been got under arms,   
and were ready to march against Rora, but the im-   
patience of a certain Captain Mario, who had signalised   
himself in the massacre at Bobbio, and wished to ap-   
propriate the entire glory of the enterprise, would not   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 187. Muston, pp. 146-7.

PIANEZA’S LAST EFFORT. 157   
  
permit him to await the movement of the main body.   
He marched two hours in advance, with three companies   
of regular troops, few of whom ever returned. Their   
ferocious leader, borne along by the rush of his panic-   
stricken soldiers, was precipitated over the edge of the   
rock into the stream, and badly bruised. He was drawn   
out and carried to Lucerna, where he died two days   
afterwards, in great torment of body, and yet greater   
torment of mind. Of the three companies which he led   
in this fatal expedition, one was composed of Irish, who   
had been banished by Cromwell, and who met in this   
distant land the death they had inflicted on others in   
their own, leaving their corpses to fatten those valleys   
which were to have been theirs had they succeeded in   
purging them of heresy and heretics.\*   
 This series of strange events was now drawing to an   
end. The fury of Pianeza knew no bounds. This war   
of his, though waged only with herdsmen, had brought   
him nothing but disgrace, and the loss of his bravest   
soldiers. Victor Amadeus once observed that "the skin   
of every Vaudois cost him fifteen of his best Piedmon-   
tese soldiers." Pianeza had lost some hundreds of his   
best soldiers, and yet not one of the little troop of   
Gianavello, dead or alive, had he been able to get into   
his hands. Nevertheless, he resolved to continue the   
struggle, but with a much greater army. He assembled   
10,000, and attacked Rora on three sides at once.   
While Gianavello was bravely combating with the first   
troop of 3,000, on the summit of the pass that gives   
entrance from the Valley of the Pelice, a second of   
6,000 had entered by the ravine at the foot of the   
valley; and a third of 1,000 had crossed the mountains   
that divide Bagnolo from Rora. But, alas! who shall   
describe the horrors that followed the entrance of these   
assassins? Blood, burning, and rapine in an instant   
overwhelmed the little community. No distinction was   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 188. Muston, pp. 148-9.

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made of age or sex. None had pity for their tender   
years; none had reverence for their grey hairs. Happy   
they who were slain at once, and thus escaped horrible   
indignities and tortures. The few spared from the sword   
were carried away as captives, and among these were the   
wife and the three daughters of Gianavello.\*   
 There was now nothing more in the Valley of Rora   
for which the patriot-hero could do battle. The light   
of his hearth was quenched, his village was a heap of   
smoking ruins, his fathers and brethren had fallen by   
the sword ; but rising superior to these accumulated   
calamities, he marched his little troop over the moun-   
tains, to await on the frontier of his country whatever   
opportunities Providence might yet open to him of   
wielding his sword in defence of the ancient liberties   
and the glorious faith of his people.   
 It was at this time that Pianeza, intending to deal   
the finishing blow that should crush the hero of Rora,   
wrote to Gianavello as follows: — "I exhort you for the   
last time to renounce your heresy. This is the only hope   
of your obtaining the pardon of your prince, and of   
saving the life of your wife and daughters, now my   
prisoners, and whom, if you continue obstinate, I will   
burn alive. As for yourself, my soldiers shall no longer   
pursue you, but I will set such a price upon your head,   
as that, were you Beelzebub himself, you shall infallibly   
be taken ; and be assured that, if you fall alive into my   
hands, there are no torments with which I will not punish   
your rebellion.\* To these ferocious threats Gianavello   
magnanimously and promptly replied: "There are no   
torments so terrible, no death so barbarous, that I would   
not choose rather than deny my Saviour. Your threats   
cannot cause me to renounce my faith; they but fortify   
me in it. Should the Marquis de Pianeza cause my wife   
and daughters to pass through the fire, it can but con-   
sume their mortal bodies; their souls I commend to   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 189. Monastier, p. 277.

THE PEASANT-HERO OF RORA. 159   
  
God, trusting that he will have mercy on them, and on   
mine, should it please him that I fall into the marquis's   
hands."\* We do not know whether Pianeza was capable   
of seeing that this was the most mortifying defeat he   
had yet sustained at the hands of the peasant-hero of   
Rora; and that he might as well war against the Alps   
themselves as against a cause that could infuse a spirit   
like this into its champions. Gianavello's reply, observes   
Leger, "certified him as a chosen instrument in the   
hands of God for the recovery of his country seemingly   
lost."   
 Gianavello had saved from the wreck of his family his   
infant son, and his first care was to seek a place of safety   
for him. Laying him on his shoulders, he passed the   
frozen Alps which separate the Valley of Lucerna from   
France, and entrusted the child to the care of a relative   
resident at Queyras, in the Valleys of the French Pro-   
testants. With the child he carried thither the tidings   
of the awful massacre of his people. Indignation was   
roused. Not a few were willing to join his standard,   
brave spirits like himself; and, with his little band   
greatly recruited, he repassed the Alps in a few weeks,   
to begin his second and more successful campaign. On   
his arrival in the Valleys he was joined by Giaheri,   
under whom a troop had been assembling to avenge the   
massacre of their brethren.   
 In Giaheri, Captain Gianavello had found a com-   
panion worthy of himself, and worthy of the cause for   
which he was now in arms. Of this heroic man Leger   
has recorded that, "though he possessed the courage of   
a lion, he was as humble as a lamb, always giving to   
God the glory of his victories; well versed in Scripture,   
and understanding controversy, and of great natural   
talent." The massacre had reduced the Vaudois race to all   
but utter extermination, and 500 men were all that the   
two leaders could collect around their standard. The army   
  
\* Leger, part ii. p. 189.

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opposed to them, and at this time in their Valleys, was   
from 15,000 to 20,000 strong, consisting of trained and   
picked soldiers. Nothing but an impulse from the God   
of battles could have moved these two men, with such a   
handful, to take the field against such odds. To the eye   
of a common hero all would have seemed lost; but the   
courage of these two Christian warriors was based on   
faith. They believed that God would not permit his   
cause to perish, or the lamp of the Valleys to be extin-   
guished; and, few though they were, they knew that   
God was able by their humble instrumentality to save   
their country and Church. In this faith they unsheathed   
the sword; and so valiantly did they wield it, that soon   
that sword became the terror of the Piedmontese armies.   
The ancient promise was fulfilled, "The people that do   
know their God shall be strong and do exploits.''   
 We cannot go into details. Prodigies of valour were   
performed by this little host. "I had always considered   
the Vaudois to be men," said Descombies, who had   
joined them, "but I found them lions." Nothing could   
withstand the fury of their attack. Post after post and   
village after village were wrested from the Piedmontese   
troops. Soon the enemy was driven from the upper   
valleys. The war now passed down into the plain of   
Piedmont, and there it was waged with the same heroism   
and the same success. They besieged and took several   
towns, they fought not a few pitched battles; and in   
those actions they were nearly always victorious, though   
opposed by more than ten times their number. Their   
success could hardly be credited had it not been recorded   
by historians whose veracity is above suspicion, and the   
accuracy of whose statements was attested by eye-wit-   
nesses. Not unfrequently did it happen at the close of   
a day's fighting that 1,400 Piedmontese dead covered   
the field of battle, while not more than six or seven of   
the Waldenses had fallen. Such success might well be   
termed miraculous; and not only did it appear so to the



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Vaudois themselves, but even to their foes, who could   
not refrain from expressing their conviction "that surely   
God was on the side of the Barbets."   
 While the Vaudois were thus heroically maintaining   
their cause by arms, and rolling back the chastisement of   
war on those from whom its miseries had come, tidings   
of their wrongs were travelling to all the Protestant   
States of Europe. Wherever these tidings came a   
feeling of horror was evoked, and the cruelty of the   
Government of Savoy was universally and loudly exe-   
crated. All confessed that such a tale of woe they had   
never before heard. But the Protestant States did not   
content themselves with simply condemning these deeds;   
they judged it to be their clear duty to move in behalf   
of this poor and greatly oppressed people; and foremost   
among those who did themselves lasting honour by in-   
terposing in behalf of a people "drawn unto death and   
ready to perish," was, as has already been said, England,   
then under the protectorate of Cromwell. In the previous   
chapter mention was made of the Latin letter, the com-   
position of Milton, which the Protector addressed to   
the Duke of Savoy. In addition, Cromwell wrote to   
Louis XIV. of France, soliciting his mediation with the   
duke in behalf of the Vaudois. The letter is interesting   
as containing the truly catholic and noble sentiments of   
England, to which the pen of her great poet gave   
fitting expression: —   
 "Most Serene and Potent King,   
 "After a most barbarous   
  
slaughter of persons of both sexes, and of all ages, a   
treaty of peace was concluded, or rather secret acts of   
hostility were committed the more securely under the   
name of a pacification. The conditions of the treaty   
were determined in your town of Pinerolo: hard con-   
ditions enough, but such as these poor people would   
gladly have agreed to, after the horrible outrages to

CROMWELL’S LETTER TO LOUIS XIV. 163   
  
which they had been exposed, provided that they had   
been faithfully observed. But they were not observed;   
the meaning of the treaty is evaded and violated, by   
putting a false interpretation upon some of the articles,   
and by straining others. Many of the complainants   
have been deprived of their patrimonies, and many have   
been forbidden the exercise of their religion. New pay-   
ments have been exacted, and a new fort has been built   
to keep them in cheek, from whence a disorderly soldiery   
makes frequent sallies, and plunders or murders all it   
meets. In addition to these things, fresh levies of troops   
are clandestinely preparing to march against them; and   
those among them who profess the Roman Catholic   
religion have been advised to retire in time; so that   
everything threatens the speedy destruction of such as   
escaped the former massacre. I do therefore beseech and   
conjure your Majesty not to suffer such enormities, and   
not to permit (I will not say any prince, for surely such   
barbarity never could enter into the heart of a prince,   
much less of one of the duke's tender age, or into the   
mind of his mother) those accursed murderers to indulge   
in such savage ferocity, who, while they profess to be   
the servants and followers of Christ, who came into the   
world to save sinners, do blaspheme his name, and trans-   
gress his mild precepts, by the slaughter of innocent   
men. Oh, that your Majesty, who has the power, and   
who ought to be inclined to use it, may deliver so many   
supplicants from the hands of murderers, who are already   
drunk with blood, and thirst for it again, and who take   
pleasure in throwing the odium of their cruelty upon   
princes! I implore your Majesty not to suffer the   
borders of your kingdom to be polluted by such mon-   
strous wickedness. Remember that this very race of   
people threw itself upon the protection of your   
grandfather, King Henry IV., who was most friendly   
disposed towards the Protestants, when the Duke of   
Lesdiguieres passed victoriously through their country,

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as affording the most commodious passage into Italy at   
the time he pursued the Duke of Savoy in his retreat   
across the Alps. The act or instrument of that sub-   
mission is still extant among the public records of your   
kingdom, in which it is provided that the Vaudois shall   
not be transferred to any other government, but upon   
the same condition that they were received under the   
protection of your invincible grandfather. As suppli-   
cants of his grandson, they now implore the fulfilment   
of this compact.   
  
 \* \* \* \*  
"Given at our Court at Westminster, this 26th of   
May, 1658."   
  
 The French King undertook the mediation, as re-   
quested by the Protestant princes, but hurried it to a   
conclusion before the ambassadors from the Protestant   
States had arrived. The delegates from the Protestant   
cantons of Switzerland were present, but they were per-   
mitted to act the part of onlookers simply. The Grand   
Monarch took the whole affair upon himself, and on the   
18th of August, 1655, a treaty of peace was concluded   
of a very disadvantageous kind. The Waldenses were   
stripped of their ancient possessions on the right bank of   
the Pelice, lying toward the plain of Piedmont. Within   
the new boundary they were guaranteed liberty of wor-   
ship; an amnesty was granted for all offences committed   
during the war; captives were to be restored when   
claimed; and they were to be exempt from all imposts   
for five years, on the ground that they were so im-   
poverished as not to be able to pay anything.   
 When the treaty was published it was found to   
contain two clauses that astonished the Protestant   
world. In the preamble the Vaudois were styled   
rebels, whom it had pleased their prince graciously to   
receive back into favour; and in the body of the deed   
was an article, which no one recollected to have heard

A ONE-SIDED TREATY OP PEACE. 165   
  
mentioned during the negotiations, empowering the   
French to construct a fort above La Torre. This   
looked like a preparation for renewing the war.   
 By this treaty the Protestant Statro were outwitted;   
their ambassadors were duped; and the poor Vaudois   
were left as much as ever in the power of the Duke of   
Savoy and of the Council for the Propagation of the   
Faith and the Extirpation of Heretics.

CHAPTER XV.   
  
 THE EXILE.   
  
New Troubles — Louis XIV. and his Confessor — Edict against the   
 Vaudois — Their Defenceless Condition — Their Fight and Victory—   
 They Surrender— The Whole Nation Thrown into Prison— Utter   
 Desolation of the Land— Horrors of the Imprisonment— Their Release   
 — Journey across the Alps— Its Hardships— Arrival of the Exiles at   
 Geneva— Their Hospitable Reception.

After the great Massacre of 1655, the Church of the   
Valleys had rest from persecution for thirty years. This   
period, however, can be styled one of rest only when   
contrasted with the frightful storms which had con-   
vulsed the era that immediately preceded it. The enemies   
of the Vaudois still found innumerable ways in which to   
annoy and harass them. Ceaseless intrigues were con-   
tinually breeding new alarms, and the Vaudois had often   
to till their fields and prune their vines with their   
muskets slung across their shoulders. Many of their   
chief men were sent into exile. Captain Gianavello and   
Pastor Leger, whose services to their people were too great   
ever to be forgiven, had sentence of death passed on   
them. Leger "was to be strangled; then his body was   
to be hung by one foot on a gibbet for four-and-twenty   
hours; and, lastly, his head was to be cut off and publicly   
exposed at San Giovanni. His name was to be inserted   
in the list of noted outlaws; his houses were to be   
burned."\* Gianavello retired to Geneva, where he con-   
tinued to watch with unabated interest the fortunes of   
his people. Leger became pastor of a congregation at   
  
\* Leger, part ii., p. 275.

THE GRAND MONARCH AND THE PRIESTS. 167   
  
Leyden, where he crowned a life full of labour and,   
suffering for the Gospel, by a work which has laid   
all Christendom under obligations to him; we refer   
to his *History of the Churches of the Vaudois* — a noble   
monument of his Church's martyr-heroism and his own   
Christian patriotism.   
 Hardly had Leger unrolled to the world's gaze the   
record of the last awful tempest which had smitten   
the Valleys, when the clouds returned, and were seen   
rolling up in dark, thunderous masses against this devoted   
land. Former storms had assailed thern from the south,   
having collected in the Vatican; the tempest now ap-   
proaching had its first rise on the north of the Alps.   
It was the year 1685; Louis XIV. was nearing the   
grave, and with the great Audit in view he inquired of   
his confessor by what good deed as a king he might   
atone for his many sins as a man. The answer was   
ready. He was told that he must extirpate Protestantism   
in France.   
 The Grand Monarch, as the age styled him, bowed   
obsequiously before the shaven crown of priest, while   
Europe was trembling before his armies. Louis XIV.   
did as he was commanded; he revoked the Edict of   
Nantes. This gigantic crime inflicted no less misery   
on the Protestants than it brought countless woes on   
the throne and nation of France. But it is the nation of   
the Vaudois, and the persecution which the counsel of   
Pere la Chaise brought upon them, with which we   
have here to do. Wishing for companionship in the   
sanguinary work of purging France from Protestantism,   
Louis XlV. sent an ambassador to the Duke of Savoy,   
with a request that he would deal with the Waldenses   
as he was now dealing with the Huguenots. The young   
and naturally humane Victor Amadeus was at the   
moment on more than usually friendly terms with his   
subjects of the Valleys. They had served bravely under   
his standard in his late war with the Genoese, and he

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had but recently written them a letter of thanks. How   
could he unsheathe his sword against the men whose devo-   
tion and valour had so largely contributed to his victory?   
Victor Amadeus deigned no reply to the French ambas-   
sador. The request was repeated; it received an evasive   
answer; it was urged a third time, accompanied by   
a hint from the potent Louis that if it was not con-   
venient for the duke to purge his dominions, the King of   
France would do it for him with an army of 14,000 men,   
and would keep the Valleys for his pains. This was   
enough. A treaty was immediately concluded between   
the duke and the French King, in which the latter   
promised an armed force to enable the former to reduce   
the Vaudois to the Roman obedience, or to exterminate   
them\* On the 31st of January, 1686, the following   
edict was promulgated in the Valleys: —   
  
" I. The Vaudois shall henceforth and for ever cease   
and discontinue all the exercises of their religion.   
" II. They are forbidden to have religious meetings,   
under pain of death, and penalty of confiscation of all   
their goods.   
" III. All their ancient privileges are abolished.   
" IV. All the churches, prayer-houses, and other   
edifices consecrated to their worship shall be razed to   
the ground.   
" V. All the pastors and schoolmasters of the Valleys   
are required either to embrace Romanism or to quit the   
country within fifteen days, under pain of death and   
confiscation of goods.   
" VI. All the children born, or to be born, of Pro-   
testant parents shall be compulsorily trained up as Roman   
Catholics. Every such child yet unborn shall, within a   
week after its birth, be brought to the cure of its parish,   
and admitted of the Roman Catholic Church, under pain,   
on the part of the mother, of being publicly whipped   
  
\* Monastier, p. 311



THE PASS OF PRA DEL TOR.   
  
  
  
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with rods, and on the part o£ the father of labouring   
five years in the galleys.   
"VII. The Vaudois pastors shall abjure the doctrine   
they have hitherto publicly preached; shall receive a   
salary, greater by one-third than that which they pre-   
viously enjoyed; and one-half thereof shall go in reversion   
to their widows.   
"VIII. All Protestant foreigners settled in Pied-   
mont are ordered either to become Roman Catholics, or   
to quit the country within fifteen days.   
"IX. By a special act of his great and paternal   
clemency, the sovereign will permit persons to sell, in   
this interval, the property they may have acquired in   
Piedmont, provided the sale be made to Roman Catholic   
purchasers.''   
 This monstrous edict seemed to sound the knell of   
the Vaudois as a Protestant people. Their oldest tradi-   
tions did not contain a decree so cruel and unrighteous,   
nor one that menaced them with so complete and sum-   
mary a destruction as that which now seemed to impend   
over them. What was to be done? Their first step was to   
send delegates to Turin, respectfully to remind the duke   
that the Vaudois had inhabited the Valleys from the   
earliest times; that they had led forth their herds upon   
their mountains before the House of Savoy had ascended   
the throne of Piedmont; that treaties and oaths, renewed   
from reign to reign, had solemnly secured them in the   
freedom of their worship and other liberties; and that   
the honour of princes and the stability of States lay in   
the faithful observance of such covenants; and they   
prayed him to consider what reproach the throne and   
kingdom of Piedmont would incur if he should become   
the executioner of those of whom he was the natural   
protector. The Protestant cantons of Switzerland joined   
their mediations to the intercession of the Waldenses.   
And when the almost incredible edict came to be known

MUST THE VALLEYS BE ABANDONED. 171   
  
in Germany and Holland, these countries threw their   
shield over the Valleys, by interceding with the duke   
that he would not inflict so great a wrong as to east out   
from a land which was theirs by irrevocable charters, a   
people whose only crime was that they worshipped as   
their fathers had worshipped, before they passed under   
the sceptre of the duke. All these powerful parties   
pleaded in vain. Ancient charters, solemn treaties, and   
oaths, made in the face of Europe, the long-tried loyalty   
and the many services of the Vaudois to the House of   
Savoy, could not stay the uplifted arm of the duke, or   
prevent the execution of the monstrously criminal decree.   
In a little while the armies of France and Savoy arrived   
before the Valleys.   
 At no previous period of their history, perhaps, had   
the Waldenses been so entirely devoid of human aid as   
now. Gianavello, whose stout heart and brave arm had   
stood them in such stead formerly, was in exile. Crom-   
well, whose potent voice had stayed the fury of the great   
massacre, was in his grave. An avowed Papist filled the   
throne of Great Britain. It was going ill at this hour   
with Protestantism everywhere. The Covenanters of   
Scotland were hiding on the moors, or dying in the   
Grass-market of Edinburgh. France, Piedmont, and   
Italy were closing in around the Valleys; every path   
guarded, all their succours cut off, an overwhelming   
force waited the signal to massacre them. So desperate   
did their situation appear to the Swiss envoys, that they   
counselled them to "transport elsewhere the torch of   
the Gospel, and not keep it here to be extinguished in   
blood."   
 The proposal to abandon their ancient inheritance,   
coming from such a quarter, startled the Waldenses. It   
produced, at first, a division of opinion in the Valleys,   
but ultimately they united in rejecting it. They remem-   
bered the exploits their fathers had done, and the wonders   
God had wrought in the mountain passes of Rora, in the

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defiles of Angrogna, and in the field of the Pra del Tor,   
and their faith reviving, they resolved, in a reliance on   
the same Almighty Arm which had been stretched out   
in their behalf in former days, to defend their hearths   
and altars. They repaired the old defences, and made   
ready for resistance. On the 17th of April, being Good   
Friday, they renewed their covenant, and on Easter Sun-   
day their pastors dispensed to them the Communion.   
This was the last time the sons of the Valleys partook   
of the Lord's Supper before their great dispersion.   
 Victor Amadeus II. had pitched his camp on the   
plain of San Gegonzo before the Vaudois Alps. His   
army consisted of five regiments of horse and foot. He   
was here joined by the French auxiliaries who had crossed   
the Alps, consisting of some dozen battalions, the united   
force amounting to between 15,000 and 20,000 men.   
The signal was to be given on Easter Monday, at break   
of day, by three cannon-shots, fired from the hill of   
Bricherasio. On the appointed morning, the Valleys of   
Lucerna and San Martino, forming the two extreme   
opposite points of the territory, were attacked, the first   
by the Piedmontese host, and the last by the French,   
under the command of General Catinat, a distinguished   
soldier. In San Martino the fighting lasted ten hours,   
and ended in a complete repulse of the French, who   
retired at night with a loss of more than 500 killed and   
wounded, while the Vaudois had lost only two.\* On   
the following day the French, burning with rage at their   
defeat, poured a more numerous army into San Martino,   
which swept along the valley, burning, plundering, and   
massacring, and having crossed the mountains descended   
into Pramol, continuing the same indiscriminate and ex-   
terminating vengeance. To the rage of the sword were   
added other barbarities and outrages too shocking to be   
narrated.§   
 The issue by arms being deemed uncertain, despite   
  
\* Monastier, p. 317. Muston, p. 199. § Muston, p. 200.

THE VALLEYS DESOLATE. 173   
  
the vast disparity of strength, treachery, on a great scale,   
was now had recourse to. Wherever, throughout the   
Valleys, the Vaudois were found strongly posted, and   
ready for battle, they were told that their brethren in   
the neighbouring communes had submitted, and that it   
was vain for them, isolated and alone as they now were,   
to. continue their resistance. "When they sent deputies   
to head-quarters to inquire — and passes were freely   
supplied to them for that purpose — they were assured   
that the submission had been universal, and that none   
save themselves were now in arms. They were assured,   
moreover, that should they follow the example of the   
rest of their nation, all their ancient liberties would be   
held intact.\* This base artifice was successfully practised   
at each of the Vaudois posts in succession, till at length   
the Valleys had all capitulated. We cannot blame the   
Waldenses, who were the victims of an act so dishonour-   
able and vile as hardly to be credible; but the mistake,   
alas! was a fatal one, and had to be expiated afterwards   
by the endurance of woes a hundred times more dreadful   
than any they would have encountered in the rudest   
campaign. The instant consequence of the submission   
was a massacre which extended to all their Valleys, and   
which was similar in its horrors to the great butchery of   
1655. In that massacre upwards of 3,000 perished.   
The remainder of the nation, amounting, according to   
Arnaud, to between 12,000 and 15,000 souls, were con-   
signed to the various gaols and fortresses of Piedmont.§   
We now behold these famous Valleys, for the first   
time in their history, empty. The ancient lamp burns   
no longer. The school of the prophets in the Pra del   
Tor is razed. No smoke is seen rising from cottage, and   
no psalm is heard ascending from dwelling or sanctuary.   
No herdsman leads forth his kine on the mountains, and   
no troop of worshippers, obedient to the summons of the   
Sabbath-bell, climbs the mountain paths. The vine   
  
\* Muston, p. 202. § Monastier, p. 320.

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flings wide her arms, but no skilful hand is nigh to   
train her boughs and prune her luxuriance. The chest-   
nut tree rains its fruits, but there is no troop of merry   
children to gather them, and they lie rotting on the   
ground. The terraces of the hills, that were wont to   
overflow with flowers and fruitage, and which presented   
to the eye a series of hanging gardens, now torn and   
breached, shoot in a mass of ruinous rubbish down the   
slope. Nothing is seen but dismantled forts, and the   
blackened ruins of churches and hamlets. A dreary   
silence overspreads the land, and the beasts of the field   
strangely multiply. A few herdsmen, hidden here and   
there in forests and holes of the rocks, are now the only   
inhabitants. Monte Viso, from out the silent vault,   
looks down with astonishment at the absence of that   
ancient race over whom, from immemorial time, he had   
been wont to dart his kindling glories at dawn, and let   
fall at eve in purple shadows the ample folds of his   
friendly mantle.   
 We know not if ever before an entire nation were in   
prison at once. Yet now it was so. All of the Wal-   
densian race that remained from the sword of their   
executioners were immured in the dungeons of Pied-   
mont ! The pastor and his flock, the father and his   
family, the patriarch and the stripling had passed in, in   
one great procession, and exchanged their grand rock-   
walled Valleys, their tree-embowered homes, and their   
sunlit peaks, for the filth, the choking air, and the   
Tartarean walls of an Italian gaol. And how were they   
treated in prison? As the African slave was treated on   
the "middle passage." They had a sufficiency of neither   
food nor clothing. The bread dealt out to them was   
fetid. They had putrid water to drink. They were   
exposed to the sun by day and to the cold at night.   
They were compelled to sleep on the bare pavement, or   
on straw so full of vermin that the stone floor was   
preferable. Disease broke out in these horrible abodes,

THE VAUDOIS SENT INTO EXILE. 175   
  
and the mortality was fearful. "When they entered   
these dungeons," says Henri Arnaud, "they counted   
14,000 healthy mountaineers; but when, at the inter-   
cession of the Swiss deputies, their prisons were opened,   
3,000 skeletons only crawled out." These few words   
portray a tragedy so awful that the imagination recoils   
from the contemplation of it.   
 However, at length the persecutor looses their chains,   
and opening their prison doors he sends forth these   
captives — the woe-worn remnant of a gallant people.   
But to what are they sent forth? To people again their   
ancient Valleys? To rekindle the fire on their ancestral   
hearths? To rebuild "the holy and beautiful house"   
in which their fathers had praised God? Ah, no! They   
are thrust out of prison only to be sent into exile — to   
Vaudois a living death.   
 The barbarity of 1655 was repeated. It was in   
December (1686) that the decree of liberation was issued   
in favour of these 3,000 men who had escaped the sword,   
and now survived the not less deadly epidemic of the   
prison. At that season, as every one knows, the snow   
and ice are piled to a fearful depth on the Alps; and   
daily tempests threaten with death the too adventurous   
traveller who would cross their summits. It was at this   
season that these poor captives, emaciated with sickness,   
weakened by hunger, and shivering from insufficient   
clothing, were commanded to rise up and cross the snowy   
hills. They began their journey on the afternoon of   
that very day on which the order arrived; for their   
enemies would permit no delay. One hundred and fifty   
of them died on their first march. At night they halted   
at the foot of the Mont (Denis. Next morning, when   
they surveyed the Alps they saw evident signs of a   
gathering tempest, and they besought the officer in   
charge to permit them, for the sake of their sick and   
aged, to remain where they were till the storm had   
spent its rage. With heart harder than the rocks they   
  
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were to traverse, the officer ordered them to resume their   
journey. That troop of emaciated beings began the   
ascent, and were soon struggling with the blinding   
drifts and fearful whirlwinds of the mountain. Eighty-   
six of their number, succumbing to the tempest, dropped   
by the way. Where they lay down, there they died.   
No relative or friend was permitted to remain behind to   
watch their last moments or tender them needed succour.   
That ever-thinning procession moved on and on over the   
white hills, leaving it to the falling snow to give burial   
to their stricken companions. When spring opened the   
passes of the Alps, alas! what ghastly memorials met   
the eye of the horror-stricken traveller. Strewed along   
the track were the now unshrouded corpses of these poor   
exiles, the dead child lying fast locked in the arms of the   
dead mother.   
 But why should we prolong this harrowing tale?   
The first company of these miserable exiles arrived at   
Geneva on Christmas Day, 1686, having spent about   
three weeks on the journey. They were followed by   
small parties, who crossed the Alps one after the other,   
being let out of prison at different times. It was not   
till the end of February, 1687, that the last band of   
these emigrants reached the hospitable gates of Geneva.   
But in what a plight! way-worn, sick, emaciated, and   
faint through hunger. Of some the tongue was swollen   
in their mouth, and they were unable to speak; of others   
the arms were bitten with the frost, so that they could   
not stretch them out to accept the charity offered to   
them; and some there were who dropped down and   
expired on the very threshold of the city, "finding,"   
as one has said, "the end of their life at the beginning of   
their liberty." Most hospitable was the reception given   
them by the city of Calvin. A deputation of the prin-   
cipal citizens of Geneva, headed by the patriarch Giana-   
vello, who still lived, went out to meet them on the   
frontier, and taking them to their homes, vied with



VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH OF ST. JEAN, WALDENSIAN VAULTS.

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each other which should show them the greatest kind-   
ness. Generous city! If he who shall give a cup of   
cold water to a disciple shall in nowise lose his reward,   
how much more shalt thou be requited for this thy   
kindness to the suffering and sorrowing exiles of the   
Saviour!

CHAPTER XVI.

RETURN TO THE VALLEYS.

Longings after their Valleys — Thoughts of Returning— Their Re-   
 assembling— Cross Lake Leman— Begin their March— The "Eight   
 Hundred "—Cross Mont Cenis— Great Victory in the Valley of the   
 Dora— First View of their Mountains— Worship on the Mountain-   
 top— Enter their Valleys — Pass their First Sunday at Prali—   
 Worship.

Now we open the bright page of the Vaudois history.   
We have seen nearly 3,000 Waldensian exiles enter the   
gates of Geneva, the feeble remnant of a population of   
from 14,000 to 16,000. One city could not contain   
them all, and arrangements were made for distributing   
the expatriated Vaudois among the Reformed cantons.   
The revocation of the Edict of Nantes had a little before   
thrown thousands of French Protestants upon the hos-   
pitality of the Swiss; and now the arrival of the   
Waldensian refugees brought with it yet heavier de-   
mands on the public and private charity of the cantons;   
but the response of Protestant Helvetia was equally   
cordial in the case of the last comers as in that of the   
first, and perhaps even more so, seeing their destitu-   
tion was greater. Nor were the Vaudois ungrateful.   
"Next to God, whose tender mercies have preserved   
us from being entirely consumed," said they to their   
kind benefactors, "we are indebted to you alone for life   
and liberty."   
 Several of the German princes opened their States to   
these exiles; but the influence of their great enemy,   
Louis XIV., was then too powerful in these parts to   
permit of their residence being altogether an agreeable

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one. Constantly watched by his emissaries, and their   
patrons tampered with, they were moved about from   
place to place. The question of their permanent settle-   
ment in the future was beginning to be anxiously dis-   
cussed. The project of carrying them across tbe sea   
in the ships of Holland, and planting them at the Cape,   
was even talked of. The idea of being separated for ever   
from their native land, dearer in exile than when they   
dwelt in it, gave them intolerable anguish. Was it not   
possible to reassemble their scattered colonies, and march-   
ing back to their Valleys, rekindle their ancient lamp in   
them ? This was the question which, after three years   
of exile, the Vaudois began to put to themselves. As   
they wandered by the banks of the Rhine, or traversed   
the German plains, they feasted their imaginations on   
their far-off homes. The chestnuts shading their former   
abodes, the vine bending gracefully over their portal,   
and the meadow in front, which the crystal torrent kept   
perpetually bright, and whose murmur sweetly blended   
with the evening psalm, all rose before their eyes. They   
never knelt to pray but it was with their faces turned   
toward their grand mountains, where slept their martyred   
fathers. Attempts had been made by the Duke of Savoy   
to people their territory by settling in it a mongrel   
race, partly Irish and partly Piedmontese ; but the land   
knew not the strangers, and refused to yield its strength   
to them. The Vaudois had sent spies to examine its   
condition;\* its fields lay untilled, its vines unpruned,   
nor had its ruins been raised up; it was almost as   
desolate as on the day when its sons had been driven   
out of it. It seemed to them that the land was waitinsr   
their return.   
 At length the yearning of their heart could no longer   
be repressed. The march back to their Valleys is one of   
the most wonderful exploits ever performed by any people.   
It is famous in history by the name of "La Rentree   
  
\* Monastier, p. 336.   
  
 THE EXILED VAUDOIS. 181   
  
Glorieuse." The parallel event which will recur to the   
mind of the scholar is, of course, the retreat of "the ten   
thousand Greeks/'' The patriotism and bravery of both   
will be admitted, but a candid comparison will, we think,   
incline one to assign the palm of heroism to the return of   
"the eight hundred."   
 The day fixed on for beginning their expedition was   
the 10th of June, 1688. Quitting their various canton-   
ments in Switzerland, and travelling by by-roads, they   
traversed the country by night, and assembled at Bex, a   
small town in the southern extremity of the territory of   
Bern. Their secret march was soon known to the senates   
of Zurich, Bern, and Geneva j and, foreseeing that the   
departure of the exiles would compromise them with the   
Popish powers, their Excellencies took measures to pre-   
vent it. A bark laden with arms for their use was   
seized on the Lake of Geneva. The inhabitants of the   
Vallais, in concert with the Savoyards, at the first alarm   
seized the Bridge of St. Maurice, the key of the Rhône   
Valley, and stopped the expedition. Thus were they,   
for the time, compelled to abandon their project.   
 To extinguish all hopes of their return to the Valleys,   
they were anew distributed over Germany. But scarcely   
had this second dispersion been effected, when war broke   
out ; the French troops overran the Palatinate, and the   
Vaudois settled there, dreading, not without reason, the   
soldiers of Louis XIV., retired before them, and retook   
the road to Switzerland. The Protestant cantons, pitying   
these poor exiles, tossed from country to country by   
political storms, settled them once more in their former   
allotments. Meanwhile, the scenes were shifting rapidly   
around the expatriated Vaudois, and with eyes uplifted   
they awaited the issue. They saw their protector, William   
of Orange, mount the throne of England. They saw   
their powerful enemy Louis XIV. attacked at once by   
the emperor, and humiliated by the Dutch. They saw   
their own Prince Victor Amadeus withdraw his soldiers

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from Savoy, seeing that he needed them to defend Pied-   
mont. It seemed to them that an invisible Hand was   
opening their path back to their own land. Encouraged   
by these tokens, they began to arrange a second time   
for their departure.   
 The place of appointed rendezvous was a wood on   
the northern shore of Lake Leman, near the town of   
Noyon. For days before they continued to converge, in   
scattered bands, and by stealthy marches, on the selected   
point. On the decisive evening, the 16th of August,   
1689, a general muster took place under cover of the   
friendly wood of Prangins. Having by solemn prayer   
commended their enterprise to God, they embarked on   
the lake, and crossed by star-light. Their means of   
transport would have been deficient but for a circumstance   
which threatened at first to obstruct their expedition, but   
which, in the issue, greatly facilitated it. Curiosity had   
drawn numbers to this part of the lake, and the boats   
that brought hither the sight-seers furnished more amply   
the means of escape to the Vaudois.   
 At this crisis, as on so many previous ones, a distin-   
guished man arose to lead them. Henri Arnaud, who   
was at the head of the 800 fighting men who now   
set out for their native possessions, had at first dis-   
charged the office of pastor, but the troubles of his nation   
compelling him to leave the Valleys, he had served in   
the armies of the Prince of Orange. Of decided piety,   
ardent patriotism, and of great decision and courage, he   
presented a beautiful instance of the union of the pastoral   
and the military character. It is hard to say whether   
his soldiers listened more reverentially to the exhorta-   
tions he at times delivered to them from the pulpit, or   
to the orders he gave them on the field of battle.   
 Arriving on the southern shore of the lake, these   
800 Vaudois bent their knees in prayer, and then began   
their march through a country covered with foes. Before   
them rose the great snow-clad mountains over which

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they were to fight their way. Arnaud arranged his little   
host into three companies — an advanced-guard, a centre,   
and a rear-guard. Seizing some of the chief men as   
hostages, they traversed the Valley of the Arve to Sal-   
lenches, and emerged from its dangerous passes just as   
the men of the latter place had completed their prepara-   
tions for resisting them. Occasional skirmishes awaited   
them, but mostly their march was unopposed, for the   
terror of God had fallen upon the inhabitants of Savoy.   
Holding on their way they climbed the Haut Luce Alp,\*   
and next that of Bon Homme, the neighbouring Alp to   
Mont Blanc, sinking sometimes to their middle in snow.   
Steep precipices and treacherous glaciers subjected them   
to both toil and danger. They were wet through with   
the rain, which at times fell in torrents. Their provi-   
sions were growing scanty, but their supply was recruited   
by the shepherds of the mountains, who brought them   
bread and cheese, while their huts served them at night.   
They renewed their hostages at every stage; sometimes   
they " caged" — to use their own phrase — a Capuchin   
monk, and at other times an influential landlord, but all   
were treated with uniform kindness.   
 Having crossed the Bon Homme, which divides the   
basin of the Arve from that of the Isere, they descended,   
on Wednesday, the fifth day of their march, into the   
valley of the latter stream. They had looked forward   
to this stage of their journey with great misgivings,   
for the numerous population of the Val Isere was   
known to be well armed, and decidedly hostile, and   
might be expected to oppose their march, but the enemy   
was "still as a stone" till the people had passed over.   
They next traversed Mont Iseran, and the yet more for-   
  
\* So named by the author of the Rentrée, from the village at its   
foot, but which without doubt, says Monastier (p. 349), "is either the   
Col Joli (7,240 feet high) or the Col de la FenStre, or Portetta, as it   
was named to Mr. Brookedon, who has visited these countries, and   
followed the same road as the Vaudois."



CONTEST WITH THE FRENCH. 185   
  
midable Mont Cénis, and finally descended into the   
Valley of the Dora. It was here, on Saturday, the 24th   
of August, that they encountered for the first time a   
considerable body of regular troops.   
 As they traversed the valley they were met by a   
peasant, of whom they inquired whether they could   
have provisions by paying for them. "Come on this   
way/' said the man, in a tone that had a slight touch of   
triumph in it, "you will find all that you want; they   
are preparing an excellent supper for you." \* They were   
led into the defile of Salabertrand, where the Col d'Albin   
closes in upon the stream of the Dora, and before they   
were aware they found themselves in presence of the   
French army, whose camp-fires — for night had fallen —   
illumined far and wide the opposite slope. Retreat was   
impossible. The French were 2,500 strong, flanked by   
the garrison of Exiles, and supported by a miscellaneous   
crowd of armed followers.   
 Under favour of the darkness, they advanced to the   
bridge which crossed the Dora, on the opposite bank   
of which the French were encamped. To the challenge,   
"Who goes there? "the Vaudois answered " Friends."   
The instant reply shouted out was " Kill, kill I " followed   
by a tremendous fire, which was kept up for a quarter of   
an hour. It did no harm, however, for Arnaud had   
bidden his soldiers lie flat on their faces, and permit   
the deadly shower to pass over them. But now a division-   
of the French appeared in their rear, thus placing them   
between two fires. Some one in the Vaudois army, see-   
ing that all must be risked, shouted out, "Courage! the   
bridge is won!" At these words the Vaudois started to   
their feet, rushed across the bridge sword in hand, and   
clearing it, they threw themselves with the impetuosity   
of a whirlwind upon the enemy's entrenchments. Con-   
founded by the suddenness of the attack, the French could   
only use the butt-ends of their muskets to parry the   
\* Monastier, p. 352.   
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blows. The fighting lasted two hours, and ended in the   
total rout of the French. Their leader, the Marquis de   
Larrey, after a fruitless attempt to rally his soldiers, fled   
wounded to Briancon exclaiming, "Is it possible that I   
have lost the battle and my honour?"   
 Soon thereafter the moon rose and showed the field   
of battle to the victors. On it, stretched out in death,   
lay 600 French soldiers, besides officers; and strewn   
promiscuously with the fallen, all over the field, were   
arms, military stores, and provisions. Thus had been   
suddenly opened an armoury and magazines to men who   
stood much in need both of weapons and of food. Having   
amply replenished themselves, they collected what they   
could not carry away into a heap, and set fire to it. The   
loud and multifarious noises formed by the explosions of   
the gunpowder, the sounding of the trumpets, and the   
shouting of the captains, who, throwing their caps in the   
air, exclaimed, "Thanks be to the Lord of hosts, who   
hath given us the victory," echoed like the thunder of   
heaven, and reverberating from hill to hill, formed a   
most extraordinary and exciting scene, such as was   
seldom witnessed amid these usually quiet mountains.   
This great victory cost the Waldenses only fifteen killed   
and twelve wounded.   
 Their fatigue was great, but they feared to halt on   
the battle-field, and so, rousing those who had already   
sunk into sleep, they commenced climbing the lofty   
Mont Sci. The day was breaking as they gained the   
summit. It was Sunday, and Henri Arnaud, halting   
till all should assemble, pointed out to them, just as   
they were becoming visible in the morning light, the   
mountain-tops of their own land. Welcome sight to   
their longing eyes! Bathed in the radiance of the   
rising sun, it seemed to them, as one snowy peak began   
to burn after another, that the mountains were kindling   
into joy at the return of their long-absent sons. This   
army of soldiers resolved itself into a congregation of

THE VAUDOIS REGAIN THEIR INHERITANCE. 187   
  
worshippers, and the summit of Mont Sci became their   
church. Kneeling on the mountain-top, the battle-field   
below them, and the solemn and sacred peaks of the Col   
du Pis, the Col la Veehera, and the glorious pyramid of   
Monte Viso looking down upon them in reverent silence,   
they humbled themselves before the Eternal, confessing   
their sins, and giving thanks for their many deliverances.   
Seldom has worship more sincere or more rapt been   
offered than that which this day ascended from this   
congregation of warrior-worshippers gathered under the   
dome-like vault that rose over them.   
 Refreshed by the devotions of the Sunday, and ex-   
hilarated by the victory of the day before, the heroic   
band now rushed down to take possession of their in-   
heritance, from which the single Valley of Clusone only   
parted them. It was three years and a half since they   
had crossed the Alps, a crowd of exiles, worn to skeletons   
by sickness and confinement, and now they were return-   
ing, a marshalled host, victorious over the army of   
France, and ready to encounter that of Piedmont. They   
traversed the Clusone, a plain of about two miles in   
width, watered by the broad, clear, blue-tinted Germa-   
gnasca, and bounded by hills, which offer to the eye a   
succession of terraces, clothed with the richest vines,   
mingled with the chestnut and the apple-tree. They   
entered the narrow defile of Pis, where a detachment of   
Piedmontese soldiers had been posted to guard the pass,   
but who took flight at the approach of the Vaudois, thus   
opening to them the gate of one of the grandest of their   
Valleys, San Martino. On the twelfth day after setting   
out from the shores of Lake Leman they crossed the   
frontier, and stood once more within the limits of their   
inheritance. When they mustered at Balsiglia, the first   
Vaudois village which they entered, in the western ex-   
tremity of San Martino, they found that fatigue,   
desertion, and battle had reduced their numbers from   
800 to 700.

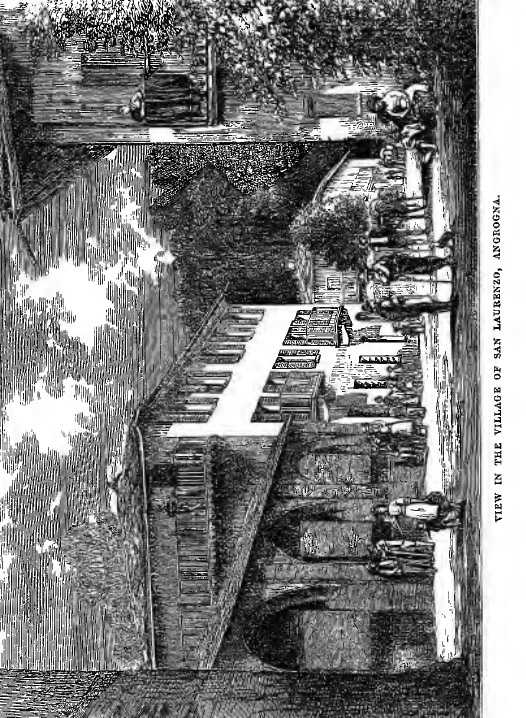
188 THE WALDENSES.   
  
The first Sunday after their return was passed at   
the village of Prali. Of all their sanctuaries, the church   
of Prali alone remained standing; of the others only the   
ruins were to be seen. They resolved to commence this   
day their ancient and scriptural worship. Purging the   
church of its Popish ornaments, one half of the little   
army, laying down their arms at the door, entered the   
edifice, while the other half stood without, the church   
being too small to contain them all. Henri Arnaud, the   
soldier-pastor, mounting a table which was placed in the   
porch, preached to them. They began their worship by   
chanting the 74th Psalm — "O God, why hast thou cast   
us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against   
the sheep of thy pasture?" &c. The preacher then took   
as his text the 129th Psalm — "Many a time have they   
afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say." The   
wonderful history of his people behind him, so to speak,   
and the reconquest of their land before him, must   
have called up the glorious achievements of their   
fathers, provoking the generous emulation of their   
sons. The worship was closed by these 700 warriors   
chanting in magnificent chorus the psalm from which   
their leader had preached.   
 To many it seemed significant that here the returned   
exiles should spend their first Sunday, and resume their   
sanctuary services. They remembered how this same   
village of Prali had been the scene of a horrible outrage   
at the time of their exodus. The Pastor of Prali,   
M. Leidet, a singularly pious man, had been discovered   
by the soldiers as he was praying under a rock, and   
being dragged forth, he was first tortured and mutilated,   
and then hanged; his last words being, "Lord Jesus,   
receive my spirit." It was surely appropriate, after the   
silence of three years and a half, during which the rage   
of the persecutor had forbidden the preaching of the   
glorious Gospel, that its re-opening should take place in   
the pulpit of the martyr Leidet.

CHAPTER XVII.

FINAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT IN THE VALLEYS.   
   
Cross the Col Julien— Seize Bobbio —Oath of Sibaud— March to Villaro —   
 Guerilla War— Retreat to La Balsiglia— Its Strength— Beauty and   
 Grandeur of San Martin o — Encampment on the Balsiglia — Surrounded   
 —Repulse of the Enemy— Depart for the Winter— Return of French   
 and Piedmontese Army in Spring— The Balsiglia Stormed— Enemy   
 Driven Back— Final Assault with Cannon— Wonderful Deliverance of   
 the Vaudois— Overtures of Peace.

The Vaudois had entered the land, but they had not yet   
got possession of it. They were a mere handful; they   
would have to face the large and well-appointed army of   
Piedmont, aided by the French. But their great leader   
to his courage added faith. The "cloud" which had   
guided them over the great mountains, with their snows   
and abysses, would cover their camp, and lead them   
forth to battle, and bring them in with victory. It was   
not surely that they might die in the larjd, that they   
had been able to make so marvellous a march back to it.   
Full of these courageous hopes, the "seven hundred "   
now addressed themselves to their great task.   
 They began to climb the Col Julien, which separates   
Prali from the fertile and central valley of the Wal-   
denses, that of Lucerna. As they toiled up and were   
now near the summit of the pass, the Piedmontese   
soldiers, who had been stationed there, shouted out,   
"Come on, ye Barbets; we guard the pass, and there   
are 3,000 of us!" They did come on. To force the   
entrenchments and put to flight the garrison was the   
work of a moment. In the evacuated camp the Vaudois   
found a store of ammunition and provisions, which to

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them was a most seasonable booty. Descending rapidly   
the slopes and precipices of the great mountain, they   
surprised and took the town of Bobbio, which nestles at   
its foot. Driving out the Popish inhabitants to whom it   
had been made over, they took possession of their ancient   
dwellings, and paused a little while to rest after the   
march and conflict of the previous days. Here their   
second Sunday was passed, and public worship again   
celebrated, the congregation chanting their psalm to the   
clash of arms. On the day following, repairing to the   
"Rock of Sibaud," where their fathers had pledged their   
faith to God and to one another, they renewed on the   
same sacred spot their ancient oath, swearing with up-   
lifted hands to abide steadfastly in the profession of the   
Gospel, to stand by one another, and never to lay down   
their arms till they had re-established themselves and   
their brethren in those Valleys which they believed had   
as really been given to them by the God of heaven as   
Palestine had been to the Jews.   
 Their next march was to Villaro, which is situated   
half-way between Bobbio at the head and La Torre at   
the entrance of the valley. This town they stormed and   
took, driving away the new inhabitants. But here their   
career of conquest was suddenly checked. The next day,   
a strong reinforcement of regular troops coming up, the   
Vaudois were under the necessity of abandoning Villaro,   
and falling back on Bobbie\* The patriot army now   
hecame. parted into two bands, and for many weeks had   
to wage a sort of guerilla war on the mountains. France   
.on the one side, and Piedmont on the other, poured in   
soldiers, in the hope of exterminating this handful of   
warriors. The privations and hardships which they   
endured were as great as the victories which they won   
in then - daily skirmishes were marvellous. But though   
always conquering, their ranks were rapidly thinning.   
What though a hundred of the enemy were slain for one   
  
\* Monastier, p. 356.   
  
 LA BALSIGLIA. 191   
  
Waldensian who fell? The Piedmontese could recruit   
their numbers; the Vaudois could not add to theirs.   
They had now neither ammunition nor provisions, save   
what they took from their enemies; and, to add to their   
perplexities, winter was near, which would bury their   
mountains, beneath its snows, and leave them without   
food or shelter. A council of war was held, and it was   
ultimately resolved to repair to the Valley of Martino,   
and entrench themselves on La Balsiglia.   
 This brings us to the last heroic stand of the returned   
exiles. But first let us sketch the natural strength and   
grandeur of the spot on which that stand was made.   
The Balsiglia is situated at the western extremity of   
San Martino, which in point of grandeur yields to few   
things in the Waldensian Alps. It is some five miles   
long by about two in width, having as its floor the   
richest meadow-land; and for walls, mountains superbly   
hung with terraces, overflowing with flower and fruitage,   
and protected above with splintered cliffs and dark peaks.   
It is closed at the western extremity by the naked face   
of a perpendicular mountain, down which the Germa-   
gnasca is seen to dash in a flood of silver. The meadows   
and woods that clothe the bosom of the valley are seamed'   
by a broad line of white, formed by the torrent, the bed   
of which is strewn with so many rocks that it resembles   
a continuous river of foam.   
 Than the clothing of the mountains that form the   
bounding walls of this valley nothing could be finer.   
On the light, as. one advances upwards, rises a succession   
of terraced vineyards, finely diversified with cornfields   
and knolls of rock, which are crowned with cottages   
or hamlets, looking out from amid their rich embower-   
ings of chestnut and apple-tree. Above this fruit-bearing   
zone are the grassy uplands, the resort- of herdsmen,   
which in their turn give place to the rocky ridges that,   
in wavy and serrated lines, run off to the higher summits,   
which recede into the clouds.   
  
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 On the left the mountain-wall is more steep, but   
equally rich in its clothing. Swathing its foot is a   
carpeting of delicious sward. Trees, vast of girth, part,   
with their over-arching branches, the bright sunlight.   
Higher up are fields of maize and forests of chestnut;   
and higher still is seen the rock-loving birch, with its   
silvery stem and graceful tresses. Along the splintered   
rocks above runs a bristling line of firs, forming mighty   
ckevauas-cle-frise.   
 Towards the head of the valley, near the vast   
perpendicular cliff already mentioned, which shuts it   
in on the west, is seen a glorious assemblage of   
mountains. One mighty cone uplifts itself above and   
behind another, till the last and highest buries its top   
in the rolling masses of cloud, which are seen usually   
hanging like a canopy above this part of the valley.   
These noble aiguilles, four in number, rise feathery with   
firs, and" remind one of the fretted pinnacles of some   
colossal cathedral. This is La Balsiglia. It was on the   
terraces of this mountain that Henri Arnaud, with his   
patriot-warriors, pitched his camp, amid the dark tem-   
pests of winter, and the yet darker tempests of a furious   
and armed bigotry. The Balsiglia shoots its gigantic   
pyramids heavenward, as if proudly conscious of having   
once been the resting-place of the Vaudois ark. It is   
no castle of man's erecting; it had for its builder the   
Almighty Architect himself.   
 It only remains, in order to complete this picture of   
a spot so famous in the wars of conscience and liberty,   
to say that behind the Balsiglia on the west rises the   
lofty Col du Pis. It is rarely that this mountain permits   
to the spectator a view of his full stature, for his dark   
sides run up and bury themselves in the clouds. Face   
to face with the Col du Pis, stands on the other side of   
the valley the yet loftier Mont Guinevert, with, most   
commonly, a veil of cloud around him, as if he too were   
unwilling to permit to the eye of visitor a sight of his



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stately proportions. Thus do these two Alps, like twin   
giants, guard this famous valley.   
 It was on the lower terrace of this pyramidal moun-   
tain, the Balsiglia, that Henri Arnaud — his army now,   
alas! reduced to 400 — sat down. Viewed from the level   
of the valley, the peak seems to terminate in a point,   
but on ascending, the top expands into a level grassy   
plateau. Steep and smooth as escarped fortress, it is   
unscalable on every side save that on which a stream   
rushes past from the mountains. The skill of Arnaud   
enabled him to add to the natural strength of the Vau-   
dois position the defences of art. They enclosed them-   
selves within earthen walls and ditches; they erected   
covered ways; they dug out some four-score cellars in   
the rock, to hold provisions, and they built huts as   
temporary barracks. Three springs that gushed out of   
the rock supplied them with water. They constructed   
similar entrenchments on each of the three peaks that   
rose above them, so that if the first were taken they could   
ascend to the second, and so on to the fourth. On the   
loftiest summit of the Balsiglia, which commanded the   
entire valley, they placed a sentinel, to watch the move-   
ments of the enemy.   
 Only three days elapsed till four battalions of the   
French army arrived, and enclosed the Balsiglia on every   
side. On the 29th of October, an assault was made on   
the Vaudois position, which was repulsed with great   
slaughter of the enemy, and the loss of not one man to   
the defenders. The snows of early winter had begun to   
fall, and the French general thought it best to postpone   
the task of capturing the Balsiglia till spring. Destroy-   
ing all the com which the Vaudois had collected and   
stored in the villages, he began his retreat from San   
Martino, and, taking laconic farewell of the Waldenses,   
he bade them have patience till Easter, when he would   
again pay them a visit.\*   
  
\* Monastier, pp. 364-6.

THE VAUDOIS IN THEIR MOUNTAIN FORTRESS. 195   
  
All through the winter of 1689-90, the Vaudois   
remained in their mountain fortress, resting after the   
marches, battles, and sieges of the previous months, and   
preparing for the promised return of the French. Where   
Henri Arnaud had pitched his camp, there had he also   
raised his altar, and if from that mountain-top was   
pealed forth the shout of battle, from it ascended also,   
morning and night, the prayer and the psalm. Besides   
daily devotions, Henri Ai-naud preached two sermons   
weekly, one on Sunday and another on Thursday. At   
stated times he administered the Lord's Supper. Nor   
was the commissariat overlooked. Foraging parties   
brought in wine, chestnuts, apples, and other fruits,   
which the autumn, now far advanced, had fully ripened.   
A strong detachment made an incursion into the French   
valleys of Pragelas and Queyras, and returned with salt,   
butter, some hundred head of sheep, and a few oxen.   
The enemy, before departing, had destroyed their stock   
of grain, and as the fields were long since reaped, they   
despaired of being able to repair their loss. And yet   
bread to last them all the winter through had been pro-   
vided, in a way so marvellous as to convince them that   
He who feeds the fowls of the air was caring for them.   
Ample magazines of grain lay all around their encamp-   
ment, although unknown as yet to them. The snow   
that year began to fall earlier than usual, and it covered   
up the ripened corn, which the Popish inhabitants had   
not time to cut when the approach of the Vaudois com-   
pelled them to flee. From this unexpected store-house   
the garrison drew as they had need. Little did the   
Popish peasantry, when they sowed the seed in spring,   
dream that Vaudois hands would reap the harvest.   
 Corn had been provided for them, and, to Vaudois   
eyes, provided almost as miraculously as was the manna   
for the Israelites, but where were they to find the means   
of grinding it into meal? At almost the foot of the   
Balsiglia, on the stream of the Germagnasca, is a little

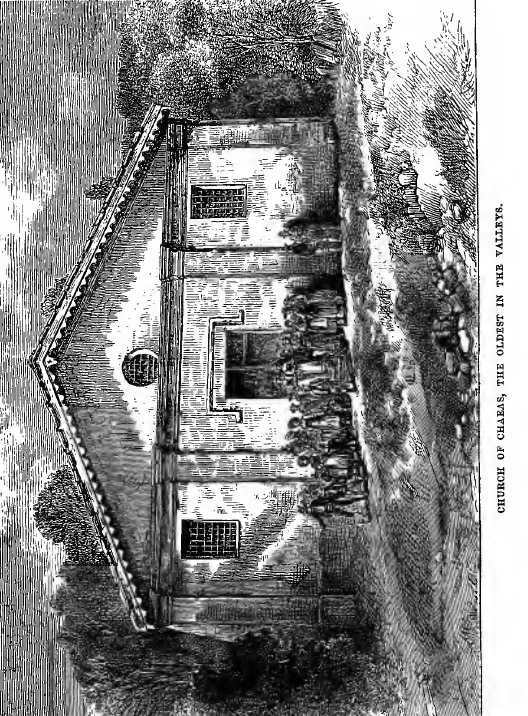
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mill. The owner, M. Tron-Poulat, three years before,   
when going forth into exile with his brethren, threw the   
mill-stone into the river; "for," said he, "it may yet   
be needed." It was needed now, and search being made   
for it, it was discovered, drawn out of the stream, and   
the mill set a- working. There was another and more   
distant mill at the entrance of the valley, to which the   
garrison had recourse when the immediate precincts of   
the Balsiglia were occupied by the enemy and the   
nearer mill was not available. Both mills exist to   
this day; their roofs of brown slate may be seen by   
the visitor, peering up through the luxuriant foliage   
of the valley, the wheel motionless, it may be, and the   
torrent which turned it shooting idly past in a volley of   
spray.   
 With the return of spring, the army of France and   
Piedmont reappeared. The Balsiglia was now com-   
pletely invested, the combined force amounting to 22,000   
in all— 10,000 French and 12,000 Piedmontese. The   
troops were commanded by the celebrated De Catinat,   
lieutenant-general of the armies of France. The "four   
hundred" Waldenses looked down from their "camp of   
rook" on the valley beneath them, and saw it glittering   
with steel by day and shining with camp-fires by night.   
Catinat never doubted that a single day's fighting would   
enable him to capture the place ; and that the victory,   
which he looked upon as already won, might be duly   
celebrated, he ordered four hundred ropes to be sent   
along with the army, in order to hang at once the four   
hundred Waldenses; and he had commanded the inhabi-   
tants of Pinerolo to prepare feux-de-joie to grace his   
return from the campaign. The head-quarters of the   
French were at Great Passet — so called in contradistinc-   
tion to Little Passet, situated a mile lower in the valley.   
Great Passet counts some thirty roofs, and is placed on   
an immense ledge of rock that juts out from the foot of   
Mont Guinevert, some 800 feet above the stream, and

CATINAT’S ASSULT REPULSED. 197   
  
right opposite the Balsiglia. On the flanks of this rocky-   
ledge are still to be seen the ruts worn by the cannon   
and baggage-waggons of the French army. There can   
be no doubt that these marks are the memorials of the   
siege, for no other wheeled vehicles ever were seen in   
these mountains.\*   
 Having reconnoitred, Catinat ordered the assault (1st   
May, 1690). Only on that side of Balsiglia where a   
stream trickles down from the mountains, and which   
offers a gradual slope, instead of a wall of rock as every-   
where else, could the attack be made with any chance of   
success. But this point Henri Arnaud had taken care   
to fortify with strong palisades. Five hundred picked   
men, supported by seven thousand musketeers, advanced   
to storm the fortress.§ They rushed forward with   
ardour; they threw themselves upon the palisades; but   
they found it impossible to tear them down, formed as   
they were of great trunks, fastened by mighty boulders.   
Massed behind the defence were the Vaudois, the younger   
men loading the muskets, and the veterans taking steady   
aim, while the besiegers were falling in dozens at every   
volley. The assailants beginning to waver, the Wal-   
densians made a fierce sally, sword in hand, and cut in   
pieces those whom the musket had spared. Of the five   
hundred picked soldiers only some score lived to rejoin   
the main body, which had been spectators from the valley   
of their total rout. Incredible as it may appear, we are   
nevertheless assured of it as a fact, that not a Vaudois   
  
\* The Author was conducted over the ground, and had all the   
memorials of the siege pointed out to him by two most trustworthy   
and intelligent guides — M. Turin, then Pastor of Macel, whose ances-   
tors had figured in the "Glorious Return;" and the late M. Tron,   
Syndic of the Commune. The ancestors of M. Tron had returned   
with Henri Arnaud, and recovered their lands in the Valley of San   
Martino, and here had the family of M. Tron lived ever since, and   
the precise spots where the more memorable events of the war had   
taken place had been handed down from father to son.   
§ Monastier, pp. 369, 370.

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was killed or wounded: not a bullet had touched one of   
them. The fireworks which Catinat had been so provi-   
dent as to bid the men of Pinerolo get ready to celebrate   
his victory were not needed that night.   
 Despairing of reducing the fortress by other means,   
the French now brought up cannon, and it was not till   
the 14th of May that all was ready, and that the last   
and grand assault was made. Across the ravine in   
which the conflict we have just described took place,   
an immense knoll juts out, at an equal level with the   
lower entrenchments of the Waldenses. To this rock   
the cannons were hoisted up to play upon the fortress.\*   
Never before had the sound of artillery shaken the rocks   
of San Martino. It was the morning of Whit-Sunday,   
and the Waldenses were preparing to celebrate the Lord's   
Supper, when the first boom from the enemy's battery   
broke upon their ear.§ All day the cannonading con-   
tinued, and its dreadful noises, re-echoed from rock to   
rock, and rolled upwards to the summits of the Col   
du Pis and the Mont Guinevert, were still further   
heightened by the thousands of musketeers who were   
stationed all round the Balsiglia. When night closed in   
the ramparts of the Waldenses were in ruins, and it was   
seen that it would not be possible longer to maintain the   
defence. What was to be done? The cannonading had   
ceased for the moment, but assuredly the dawn would   
see the attack renewed.   
 Never before had destruction appeared to impend so   
inevitably over the Vaudois. To remain where they   
were was certain death, yet whither could they flee?   
Behind them rose the unscalable precipices of the Col du   
Pis, and beneath them lay the valley swarming with   
foes. If they should wait till the morning broke it   
  
\* Cannon-balls are occasionally picked up in the neighbourhood   
of the Balsiglia. In 1857 the Anthor was shown one in the Presbyters   
of Pomaretto, which had been dug up a little before.   
§ Monastier, p. 371

SAVED BY A MIST. 199   
  
would be impossible to pass the enemy without being   
seen; and even now, although it was night, the   
numerous camp-fires that blazed beneath them made it   
almost as bright as day. But the hour of their ex-   
tremity was the time of God's opportunity. Often   
before it had been seen to be so, but perhaps never so   
strikingly as now. While they looked this way and   
that way, but could discover no escape from the net that   
enclosed them, the mist began to gather on the summits   
of the mountains around them. They knew the old   
mantle that was wont to be cast around their fathers in   
the hour of peril. It crept lower and yet lower on the   
great mountains. Now it touched the supreme peak of   
the Balsiglia.   
 Will it mock their hopes? Will it only touch, but   
not cover, their mountain camp? Again it is in motion;   
downward roll its white fleecy billows, and now it hangs   
in sheltering folds around the war-battered fortress and   
its handful of heroic defenders. They dared not as yet   
attempt escape, for still the watch-fires burned brightly   
in the valley. But it was only for a few minutes longer.   
The mist kept its downward course, and now all was   
dark. A Tartarean gloom filled the gorge of San   
Martino.   
 At this moment, as the garrison stood mute, ponder-   
ing whereunto these things would grow, Captain Poulat,   
a native of these parts, broke silence. He bade them be   
of good courage, for he knew the paths, and would con-   
duct them past the French and Piedmontese lines, by a   
track known only to himself. Crawling on their hands   
and knees, and passing close to the French sentinels, yet   
hidden from them by the mist, they descended frightful   
precipices, and made their escape. "He who has not   
seen such paths," says Arnaud in his Rentree Glorieuse,   
"cannot conceive the danger of them, and will be in-   
clined to consider my account of the march a mere   
fiction. But it is strictly true; and I must add, the

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place is so frightful that even some of the Vaudois   
themselves were terror-struck when they saw by day-   
light the nature of the spot they had passed in the   
dark." When the day broke, every eye in the plain   
below was turned to the Balsiglia. That day the four   
hundred ropes which Catinat had brought with him were   
to be put in requisition, and the feux-de-joie so long   
prepared were to be lighted at Pinerolo. What was   
their amazement to find the Balsiglia abandoned! The   
Vaudois had escaped and were gone, and might be seen   
upon the distant mountains, climbing the snows, far out   
of the reach of their would-be captors. Well might   
they sing —   
 "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers.   
 The snare is broken, and we are escaped."   
  
 There followed several days, during which they wan-   
dered from hill to hill, or lay hid in woods, suffering   
great privations, and encountering numerous perils. At   
last they succeeded in reaching the Pra del Tor. To   
their amazement and joy, on arriving at this celebrated   
and hallowed spot, they found deputies from their prince,   
the Duke of Savoy, waiting them with an overture of   
peace. The Vaudois were as men that dreamed. An   
overture of peace! How was this? A coalition, in-   
cluding Germany, Great Britain, Holland, and Spain,   
had been formed to check the ambition of France, and   
three days had been given to Victor Amadeus to say to   
which side he would join himself — the Leaguers or   
Louis XIV. He resolved to break with Louis and take   
part with the coalition. In this case, to whom could he   
so well commit the keys of the Alps as to his trusty   
Vaudois? Hence the overture that met them in the Pra   
del Tor. Ever ready to rally round the throne of their   
prince the moment the hand of persecution was with-   
drawn, the Vaudois closed with the peace offered them.   
Their towns and lands were restored; their churches



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were reopened for Protestant worship; their brethren   
still in prison at Turin were liberated, and the colonists   
of their countrymen in Germany had passports to return   
to their homes; and thus, after a dreary interval of   
three and a half years, the Valleys were again peopled   
with their ancient race, and resounded with their ancient   
songs. So closed that famous period of their history,   
which, in respect of the wonders, we might say the   
miracles, that attended it, we can compare only to the   
march of the chosen people through the wilderness to   
the Land of Promise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONDITION OF THE WALDENSES FROM 1690.

Annoyances — Burdens — Foreign Contributions — French Revolution-   
 Spiritual Revivals — Felix Neff— Dr. Gilly — General Beckwith—   
 Oppressed Condition previous to 1840 — Edict of Carlo Alberto-   
 Freedom of Conscience — The Vaudois Church, the Door by which   
 Religious Liberty Entered Italy— Their Lamp Kindled at Rome.

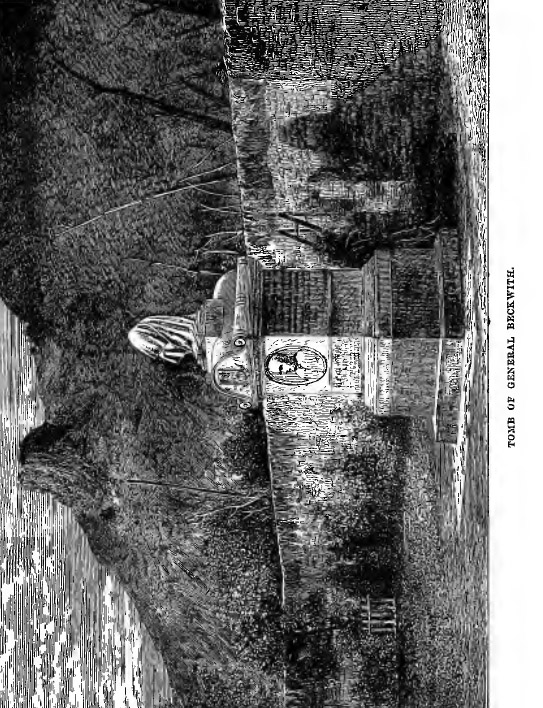
With this second planting of the Vaudois in their   
Valleys, the period of their great persecutions may be   
said to have come to an end. Their security was not   
complete, nor their measure of liberty entire. They   
were still subject to petty oppressions; enemies were   
never wanting to whisper things to their prejudice;   
little parties of Jesuits would from time to time appear   
in their Valleys, the forerunners, as they commonly   
found them, of some new and hostile edict; they lived   
in continual apprehension of having the few privileges   
which had been conceded to them swept away; and on   
one occasion they were actually threatened with a second   
expatriation. They knew, moreover, that Rome, the   
real author of all their calamities and woes, still medi-   
tated their extermination, and that she had entered a   
formal protest against their rehabilitation, and given   
the duke distinctly to understand that to be the friend   
of the Vaudois was to be the enemy of the Pope.\*   
Nevertheless their condition was tolerable compared with   
  
\* Monastier, p. 389. The Pope, Innocent XII., declared (19th   
August, 1694) the edict of the duke re-establishing the Vaudois null   
and void, and enjoined his inquisitors to pay no attention to it in   
their pursuit of the heretics.

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the frightful tempests which had darkened their sky in   
previous eras.   
 The Waldenses had everything to begin anew. Their   
numbers were thinned; they were bowed down by   
poverty; but they had vast recuperative power; and   
their brethren in England and Germany hastened to aid   
them in reorganising their Church, and bringing once   
more into play that whole civil and ecclesiastical economy   
which the "exile " had so rudely broken in pieces.   
William III. of England incorporated a Vaudois regi-   
ment at his own expense, which he placed at the service   
of the duke, and to this regiment it was mainly owing   
that the duke was not utterly overwhelmed in his wars   
with his former ally, Louis XIV. At one point of the   
campaign, when hard pressed, Victor Amadeus had to   
sue for the protection of the Vaudois, on almost the very   
spot where the deputies of Gianavello had sued to him   
for peace, but had sued in vain.   
 In 1692 there were twelve churches in the Valleys;   
but the people were unable to maintain a pastor to each.   
They were ground down by military imposts. More-   
over, a peremptory demand was made upon them for   
payment of the arrears of taxes which had accrued in   
respect of their lands during the three years they had   
been absent, and when to them there was neither seed-   
time nor harvest. Anything more extortionate could   
not be imagined. In their extremity, Mary of England,   
the consort of William III., granted them a "Royal   
Subsidy,'' to provide pastors and schoolmasters, and this   
grant was increased with the increased number of   
parishes, till it reached the annual sum of £550. A   
collection which was made in Great Britain at a sub-   
sequent period (1770) permitted an augmentation of the   
(salaries of the pastors. This latter fund bore the name   
of the "National Subsidy," to distinguish it from the   
former, the "Royal Subsidy." The States-General of   
Holland followed in the wake of the English sovereign,

ARNAUD BANISHED. 205   
  
and made collections for salaries to schoolmasters, gratui-   
ties to superannuated pastors, and for the founding of   
a Latin school. Nor must we omit to state that the   
Protestant cantons of Switzerland appropriated bursaries   
to students from the Valleys at their academies — one at   
Basle, five at Lausanne, and two at Geneva.\*   
 The policy of the Court of Turin towards the Wal-   
denses changed with the shiftings in the great current   
of European politics. At one unfavourable moment,   
when the influence of the Vatican was in the ascendant,   
Henri Arnaud, who had so gloriously led back the Israel   
of the Alps to their ancient inheritance, was banished   
from the Valleys, along with others, his companions   
in patriotism and virtue, as now in exile. England,   
through William, sought to draw the hero to her own   
shore, but Arnaud retired to Schoenberg, where he spent   
his last years in the humble and affectionate dis-   
charge of the duties of a pastor among his expatriated   
countrymen, wbose steps he guided to the heavenly   
abodes, as he had done those of their brethren to their   
earthly land. He died in 1721, at the age of four-score   
years.   
 The century passed without any very noticeable event.   
The spiritual condition of the Vaudois languished. The   
year 1789 brought with it astounding changes. The   
French Revolution rung out the knell of the old times,   
and introduced, amidst those earthquake-shocks that   
convulsed nations, and laid thrones and altars prostrate,   
a new political age. The Vaudois once again passed   
under the dominion of France. There followed an en-   
largement of their civil rights, and an amelioration of   
their social condition; but, unhappily, with the friend-   
ship of France came the poison of its literature, and   
Voltairianism threatened to inflict more deadly injury   
on the Church of the Alps than all the persecutions   
of the previous centuries. At the Restoration the   
  
\* Muston, pp. 220-1. Monastier, pp. 388-9.

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Waldenses were given back to their former sovereign, and   
with their return to the House of Savoy they returned   
to their ancient restrictions, though the hand of bloody   
persecution could no more be stretched out.   
 The time was now drawing near when this venerable   
people was to obtain a final emancipation. That great   
deliverance rose on them, as day rises on the earth, by   
slow stages. The visit paid them by the apostolic Felix   
Neff, in 1808, was the first dawning of their new day.   
With him a breath from heaven, it was felt, had passed   
over the dry bones. The next stage in their resur-   
rection was the visit of Dr. William Stephen Gilly,   
in 1828. He cherished, he tells us, the conviction that   
"this is the spot from which it is likely that the great   
Sower will again cast his seed, when it shall please him   
to permit the pure Church of Christ to resume her seat   
in those Italian States from which Pontifical intrigues   
have dislodged her."\* The result of Dr. Gilly's visit   
was the erection of a college at La Torre, for the in-   
struction of youth and the training of ministers, and   
an hospital for the sick; besides awakening great in-   
terest on their behalf in England.§   
 After Dr. Gilly there stood up another to befriend   
the Waldenses, and prepare them for their coming day   
of deliverance. The career of General Beckwith is   
invested with a romance not unlike that which belongs   
to the life of Ignatius Loyola. Beckwith was a young   
soldier, and as brave, and chivalrous, and ambitious of   
glory as Loyola. He had passed unhurt through battle   
and siege. He fought at Waterloo till the enemy   
was in full retreat, and the sun was going down. But   
a flying soldier discharged his musket at a venture,   
  
\* Waldensian Researches, hy "William Stephen Gilly, M.A., Pre-   
bendary of Durham; p. 158; Lond., 1831.   
§ So deep was the previous ignorance respecting this people,   
that Sharon Turner, speaking of the Waldenses in his *History of   
England,* placed them on the shores of Lake Leman, confounding the   
Valleys of the Vaudois with the Canton de Vaud.   
 GENEUAL BECKWITH AMONG THE VAUDOIS. 207   
  
and the leg of the young officer was hopelessly shat-   
tered by the bullet. Beckwith, like Loyola, passed months   
upon a bed of pain, during which he drew forth from   
his portmanteau his neglected Bible, and began to read   
and study it. He had lain down, like Loyola, a knight   
of the sword, and like him he rose up a knight of the   
Cross, but in a truer sense.   
 One day in 1827 he paid a visit to Apsley House,   
and while he waited for the duke, he took up a volume   
which was lying on the table. It was Dr. Gilly's   
narrative of his visit to the Waldenses. Beckwith   
felt himself drawn irresistibly to a people with whose   
wonderful history this book made him acquainted for   
the first time. From that hour his life was consecrated   
to them. He lived among them as a father — as a king.   
He devoted his fortune to them. He built schools, and   
churches, and parsonages. He provided improved school-   
books, and suggested better modes of teaching. He   
strove above ali things to quicken their spiritual life.   
He taught them how to respond to the exigencies of   
modern times. He specially inculcated upon them   
that the field was wider than their Valleys; and that   
they would one day be called to arise and to walk   
through Italy, in the length of it and in the breadth   
of it. He was their advocate at the court of Turin ;   
and when he had obtained for them the possession   
of a burying-ground outside their Valleys, he exclaimed,   
"Now they have got infeftment of Piedmont, as the   
patriarchs did of Canaan, and soon all the land will   
be theirs."\*   
  
\* The Author may be permitted to hear his personal testimony   
to the labours of General Beckwith for the "Waldenses, and through   
them for the evangelisation of Italy. On occasion of his first   
visit to the Valleys in 1851, he passed a week mostly in the society   
of the general, and had details from his own lips of the methods he   
was pursuing for the elevation of the Church of the Vaudois. All   
through the Valleys he was revered as a father. His common ap-   
pellation among them was " The Benefactor of the Vaudois."

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But despite the efforts of Gilly and Beckwith, and   
the growing spirit of toleration; the Waldenses continued   
to groan under a load of political and social disabilities.   
They were still a proscribed race.   
 The once goodly limits of their Valleys had, in   
later times, been greatly contracted, and like the iron   
cell in the story, their territory was almost yearly   
tightening its circle round them. They could not own,   
or even farm, a foot-breadth of land, or practise any   
industry, beyond their own boundary. They could   
not bury their dead save in their Valleys ; and when   
it chanced that any of their people died at Turin or   
elsewhere, their corpses had to be carried all the way   
to their own graveyards. They were not permitted to   
erect a tombstone above their dead, or even to enclose   
their burial-grounds with a wall. They were shut   
out from all the learned and liberal professions — they   
could not be bankers, physicians, or lawyers. No   
avocation was left them but that of tending their herds   
and pruning their vines. When any of them emigrated   
to Turin, or other Piedmontese town, they were not   
permitted to be anything but domestic servants. There   
was no printing-press in their Valleys — they were for-   
bidden to have one; and the few books they possessed,   
mostly Bibles, catechisms, and hymn-books, were printed   
abroad, chiefly in Great Britain; and when they ar-   
rived at La Torre, the Moderator had to sign before   
the Reviser-in-Chief an engagement that not one of   
these books should be sold, or even lent, to a Roman   
Catholic\*   
 They were forbidden to evangelise or make converts.   
But though fettered on the one side they were not   
equally protected on the other, for the priests had   
full liberty to enter their Valleys, and proselytise; and   
  
\* *General Bcekwith: his Life and Labours*, &o. By J. P.   
Meille, Pastor of the "Waldensian Church at Turin. P. 26.   
Lond.. 1873.



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if a boy oF twelve or a, girl of ten professed willing-   
ness to enter the Roman Church, they were to be taken   
from their parents, that they might with the more free-   
dom carry out their intention. They could not marry   
save among their own people. They could not erect   
a sanctuary save on the soil of their own territory. They   
could take no degree at any of the colleges of Piedmont.   
In short, the duties, rights, and privileges that constitute   
life they were denied. They were reduced as nearly as   
was practicable to simple existence, with this one great   
exception — which was granted them not as a right, but   
as a favour — namely, the liberty of Protestant worship   
within their territorial limits.   
 The Revolution of 1848, with trumpet-peal, sounded   
the overthrow of all these restrictions. They fell in   
one day. The final end of Providence in preserving   
that people during long centuries of fearful persecu-   
tions now began to be seen. The Waldensian Church   
became the door by which freedom of conscience entered   
Italy. When the hour came for framing a new consti-   
tution for Piedmont, it was found desirable to give   
standing-room in that constitution to the Waldenses,   
and this necessitated the introduction into the edict   
of the great principle of freedom of worship as a right.   
The Waldenses had contended for that principle for   
ages — they had maintained and vindicated it by their   
sufferings and martyrdoms ; and therefore they were   
necessitated to demand, and the Piedmontese Govern-   
ment to grant, this great principle. It was the only   
one of the many new constitutions framed for Italy   
at that same time in which freedom of conscience was   
enacted. Nor would it have found a place in the Pied-   
montese constitution, but for the circumstance that here   
were the Waldenses, and that their great distinctive   
principle demanded legal recognition, otherwise they   
would remain outside the constitution. The Vaudois   
alone had fought the battle, but all their countrymen

"THE LIGHT OF ALL ITALY." 211   
  
shared with them the fruits of the great victory. When   
the news of the Statuto of Carlo Alberto reached La   
Torre there were greetings on the streets, psalms in   
the churches, and blazing bonfires at night on the crest   
of the snowy Alps.   
 At the door of her Valleys with lamp in hand, its   
oil unspent and its light unextinguished, is seen, at the   
era of 1848, the Church of the Alps, prepared to obey   
the summons of her heavenly King, who has passed by   
in earthquake and whirlwind, casting down the thrones   
that of old oppressed her, and opening the doors of her   
ancient prison. She is now to go forth and be "The   
Light of all Italy," \* as Dr. Gilly, thirty years before,   
had foretold she would at no distant day become.   
Happily not all Italy as yet, but only Piedmont, was   
opened to her. She addressed herself with zeal to the   
work of erecting churches and forming congregations in   
Turin and other towns of Piedmont. Long a stranger   
to evangelistic work, the Vaudois Church had time and   
opportunity thus given her to acquire the mental courage   
and practical habits needed in the novel circumstances in   
which she was now placed. She prepared evangelists,   
collected funds, organised colleges and congregations,   
and in various other ways perfected her machinery in   
anticipation of the wider field that Providence was about   
to open to her.   
 It is now the year 1859, and the drama which had   
stood still since 1849 begins once more to advance. In   
that year Prance declared war against the Austrian   
occupation of the Italian peninsula. The tempest of   
battle passes from the banks of the Po to those of the   
Adige, along the plain of Lombardy, rapid, terrible, and   
decisive as the thunder-cloud of the Alps, and the   
Tedeschi retreat before the victorious arms of the   
French. The blood of the three great battles of the   
campaign was scarcely dry before Austrian Lombardy,   
  
\* "Totius Italiae lumen."   
  
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Modena, Parma, Tuscany, and part of the Pontifical   
States had annexed themselves to Piedmont, and their   
inhabitants'had become fellow-citizens of the Waldenses.   
With scarcely a pause there followed the brilliant cam-   
paign of Garibaldi in Sicily and Naples, and these rich   
and ample territories were also added to the now mag-   
nificent kingdom of Victor Emmanuel. The whole of   
Italy, from the Alps to Etna, the "States of the   
Church " excepted, now became the field of the Wal-   
densian Church. Nor was this the end of the drama.   
Another ten years pass away: France again sends forth   
her armies to battle, believing that she can command   
victory as aforetime. The result of the brief but terrible   
campaign of 1870, in which the French Empire dis-   
appeared and the German uprose, was the opening of   
the gates of Rome. And let us mark — for in the little   
incident we hear the voice of ten centuries — in the first   
rank of the soldiers whose cannon had burst open the   
old gates, there enters a Vaudois colporteur with a   
bundle of Bibles. The Waldenses now kindle their   
lamp at Rome, and the purpose of the ages stands   
revealed!   
  
  
 THE END.