

successful regeneration? What, I ask, is our position now? What an anomaly. We send our funeral fund, our quarterage, levies, &c., but we have no voice. Precluded by distance and the expense attending an annual meeting from here, our only other means of anything like representation is to appoint a worthy member in whom we have confidence, and he is subjected to the grossest insults no better than a dummy, and through our deputies all New Zealand is ignored and outraged. I cannot, therefore, be surprised that an uneasy feeling of doubt and an apprehension of gloomy forebodings, have occupied the attention of the members, which have led to the recent correspondence and well digested suggestions of so earnest, so energetic an officer as Bro. Cantwell, in presenting his quarterly report recently of St. Joseph's Branch, Dunedin, the formation of "Boards of Management," possessing the same rights and privileges, less the unnecessary expense attending District Boards, as at present constituted. Having carefully read all reports of the E.D. and annual meetings for the last few years, I find, on reference, on his retiring from the office of Chief President three years ago, Bro. J. W. Howard strongly recommended in his valedictory address the formation of such Boards as Bro. Cantwell now advocates. From other reports, I find that District Boards are urged, but of the six or seven C.P.'s we have had only one (and that one was the last) who denied us our right of representation, he is the only one who recommended Districts, whilst six others condemn them. We must, therefore, accept the testimony, unbiased by any selfish motives of ours, that such a simplified and much prized form of government, so applicable to our wants, so feasible, so almost certain of success when fairly and honestly administered, that I cannot refrain from giving in my adhesion for its immediate adoption. The geographical position of branches should be the first consideration to suit their convenience, prior to the formation of each Board, so, as that delegates could the more easily and regularly attend, each branch could then be represented, and from themselves elect a President of the "Board of Directory or Management," a Secretary and Treasurer; Trustees also, in whose names the Funeral Fund that is now and some time sent to Melbourne. Consolidate this, get your bye-laws registered, your meetings started, and I confidently predict a new and vigorous impetus in the history of the Society in New Zealand. That instead of being as hitherto isolated, referring everything to Melbourne, and waiting a reply when to suit themselves, everything can be done satisfactorily and expeditiously by unity of action, disinterestedness of purpose, and zeal for the cause, and we will have the full satisfaction of knowing that we are laying the permanent foundation of an organisation, which will reflect credit, not only on its founders, the name it bears, and all those who take an active part in its welfare, but on our children. Apologising for trespassing thus far on your valuable space, but this being the turning point in the history of our Society here, will, I trust, be my excuse. It is quite possible you may hear from me again.—I am, &c.,

Dunedin, August 2, 1876.

TREATY STONE.

CONTRASTS.

In times of great distress—of grief that follows the death of some one very dear to us, or of anxiety, that precedes or dreads this—it often seems as if nature were mocking us. There is a sick room on which all our energies are concentrated; or a face, whose expression has formed our earthly light, is regardless of our presence as we look upon it, upturned and fixed in the last long sleep; and, all the time, the sun is shining, gardens and meadows teem with flowers, birds are singing merrily, and insects fill the air with their cheery humming. But these things, which at other seasons would be to us a source of delight, now seem out of place and in the way. The mind appears to look for scenery appropriate to the feelings with which it views some all engrossing action or suffering that engages it.

And as circumstances at variance with those in which we are bound up make these harder to bear, so do discrepant events or surroundings add darkness to transactions which we regard from a distance. A murder committed with open violence and disturbance, horrible though it be, has not the same power to impress us that a like deed done in cold blood has. In the stillness of the night, while all the family are sleeping, a girl rises from her bed, and noiselessly withdrawing her brother, a little child, from his nurse's side, creeps away and kills him. A young man comes to visit a lady to whom he had been affianced for a time; it is summer, and he meets her in a garden; they turn down a walk together, and in a few moments she is found bleeding profusely from a mortal wound that he has given her with a knife. Dreadful deeds to contemplate would these be in any case, but is not the horror of them increased by the manner of their performance?

And, if we go further, passing from private crimes, committed in our own day, to certain that are doubtful recounted in poetry, or some that are certain told in history, we still find discordant circumstances increase our revulsion. The weirdest scene in Homer's Iliad is that where, having learned from the spy Dolon the circumstances of the Thracian encampment, Ulysses and Diomedæ stealthily enter there in the night, and the latter cuts the throats of the King and twelve of his followers as they lie, overpowered by fatigue, asleep upon the ground—"an evil dream," indeed, to them, and leaving to us a night-mare-producing fame.

The murder of Marie Antoinette was one of the most foul ever committed. Everything conspired to make her a fitting object for love and reverence. She was venerable by her birth and her descent from a historic house; she was intellectual, gentle, and benevolent; a pious Christian, a faithful wife, a devoted mother. Her beauty was surpassing, and it was of a most touching kind; in her pictures, in the great galleries of Versailles, she looks as pure and innocent as the little children accompanied by whom she is painted. And yet her death, since it occurred in a time of general bloodshed and confusion, is less horrible to contemplate, comparatively recent though it be, than that of Mary, Queen of Scots, in

the hall of Fotheringay Castle; and this, because the latter was inflicted in the midst of quietness and order. The hall was duly prepared; a platform was erected there, as it might now be elsewhere for some festive occasion; the block was placed upon it, and it was covered with black cloth; the headsmen stood with their axes close at hand. There came the queen, composed and, despite her long years of suffering, still eminently beautiful, and there was the Dean of Peterborough bent to the last on perverting the victim to his views. The attendants of the captive were also present, and a group of spectators standing a short distance off at the bottom of the hall. The deed of blood was systematically wrought, but all the more are we filled with horror, when the executioner holds up the severed head by its hair, turned grey with sorrow, while he utters his impious prayer, to which is returned the more impious response of the heretical ecclesiastic standing near. A critic speaks of Shakspeare's consummate art in causing Lady Macbeth and her lord to be interrupted immediately after the assassination of Duncan, thus bringing upon them the full realisation of their grim deed. Such a sense must have been awakened in the minds of those who had been present in the hall of Fotheringay as they passed out across the castle's threshold into the open air, where, perhaps, the birds were singing, for it was early spring, and hopeful nature gave no token of the awful spectacle that had just been witnessed within.

It seems to us that we can almost discern, in this tendency of men to look for appropriate settings for any picture of distress, an additional reason for the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, and for the thorns and thistles which the earth was sentenced thenceforth to produce, for thus the fallen found themselves in scenes assimilated to their condition, and were not liable to be grieved by beholding a state of things at variance with their altered lot.

VADIUS.

PROTESTANTISM IN ITALY.

In a recent official report published in London by one of the Bible societies, it was stated that in England there existed 152 varieties of Protestant forms of worship. Many of these are known by the most fantastical names such as Jumpers, Quakers, Shakers, Latter-Day-Saints, etc. Of these eccentric religions very few are known in Italy, but it seems that 33 sects have already established themselves in that country, and amongst these one small community of Latter-Day-Saints. In Rome there are now many Protestant churches, but all belonging to the quieter forms of the heresy. Rebetti, the Waldensian minister writes that "It is well-known that before long all the sects will be represented in Rome," and 'Le Temoin,' an organ of that sect merrily observes that "all the Protestant churches are unfolding their many colored banners in Italy and in Rome; so that before long every tint of the religious rainbow will be represented." 'L'Echo des Vallées,' the great Waldensian organ, however, asserts that "There are too many religious adventurers in Italy at present and under the name of Protestants many horrible sects have penetrated into the land, of which the Polish anti-Trinitarians and the Mormons are the most conspicuous. These latter sects actually managed to insinuate their doctrines into Italy, under the guise of pure Evangelism." The Rev. Dr. Prochet, a Protestant clergyman observed recently: "Italy has even had to endure the scourge of Protestant dissensions." Indeed, several of the best Protestant periodicals of Italy—such, for instance—as the 'Temoin,' the 'Echo,' the 'Vangelista' deplore the conduct of the rash members of the various Protestant churches who disseminate the grossest errors and not unfrequently by their evil conduct bring discredit on Protestantism. A paper entitled the 'Christian Family,' published in Florence, says: "We cannot forbear expressing our horror of the manner in which some notable Christian preachers in Italy, speak and write about the Bible and especially about the Old Testament, which they do not hesitate to declare they no longer believe to be inspired. Some of our ministers have gone so far as to alter or suppress some of the Ten Commandments, believing that they no longer hold good. If the Evangelical churches do not protest against this state of affairs it is impossible to know what will eventually become of us." The Unitarian Church has also contrived to make a footing for itself in Italy, and as the 'Unita Cattolica' very truly says, it is the most to be dreaded of all, for it denies everything, even the Divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures. Notwithstanding the zeal of many fanatical, so-called missionaries, and the receipt of vast sums of money from England and America the number of perversions is very small.—'Catholic Review.'

A correspondent writing from Herne, near Bochum, 8th April, 1876, says:—I have just assisted at divine service here, and never in my life was a deeper impression made on my mind. The population of this place is about 12,000, and the greater portion are Catholics. The priest who had built the Church, out of private subscriptions, died about twelve months ago. The Bishop had sent another priest, but he was not recognised, and is now exiled. Divine service is held regularly every Sunday, but we cannot receive any Sacraments. I wanted to hear Mass—but what a Mass!! Without a priest, the congregation crowded the altar, which is erected about six feet in front of the high altar, the tabernacle of which is open and empty. At the foot of this small altar I saw two boys dressed as for serving Mass. A layman stands at the side of the pulpit and reads the prayers of the Mass in German. Another mounts the pulpit and reads the Gospel, with an explanation sent per post by the exiled priest. Then the organ was played and the men and women in the choir sing the 'Credo' and the 'Sanctus.' The bell is rung. All bow down to the ground. Afterwards they sing a Litany, and the service is concluded. Does not this remind us of what we read of the service of the first Christians in the Roman Catacombs, during the most violent persecutions?

In Bombay, India, there is a congregation of 1,000 Catholics who worship in an old Buddhist temple.