

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE VALLENTSES SHEWN FROM
THE LANGUAGE OF RODOLPH OF ST. TRUDON.

Our next step must be over some seventy or eighty years : and then we shall once more hear of the same refractory people in the same mountainous region.

Rodolph, Abbot of St. Trudon, was engaged in writing his Chronicle, from the year 1108 to the year 1136*.

About the mean year 1124, he and some members of his Religious Fraternity were at Rome on the spiritual business of the Convent. When, at length, he purposed to return homeward, he heard : that the whole of a certain country, through which he had designed to travel, was

* Chron. Abbat. S. Trudon, lib. ix. in Dacher. Spicil. vol. vii. p. 455. Who the tutelary St. Trudon was, I am not antiquary sufficient to inform my reader. His name is abbreviated into *Tron* : and he must, I conclude, have been somewhat of a favourite in Romish Scotland, since two churches, now severally denominated *The Tron Church*, appear to have been dedicated to him in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

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Such is the narrative : and it is not difficult to collect from it the region, which is described as *being polluted by an inveterate heresy concerning the body and blood of the Lord*.

The equestrian journey of Alexander distinctly teaches us : that the direct line of march, to be pursued by Rodolph and his company, lay through Burgundy. Now the course from Rome to Burgundy would lie straight through Turin and along the skirts of the land of the Vallensic District. But, to avoid the polluted country, the holy Abbot kept to the east : and thus, by a route which must have carried him near Milan and through Switzerland, he reached Basle. To understand the justice of these remarks, nothing more is necessary than the simple consultation of a map.

I. Now the remarks in question bring out two very important results : the one, negative ; the other, positive.

At the time when Rodolph composed his Chronicle, there were *two* countries in the north of Italy, where the heresy (as he calls it) concern-

ei passio jamdudum in clune, quam physici solent *ciaticam* appellare : ea, cum gressum ei perstringeret, equitare etiam sine continuo cruciatu non sinebat. Quid moror ? Per multas animi tribulationes, per multas corporis passiones, per exitalia Montis-Jovis pericula, recepit eos tandem civitas Basilea. Alexander inde remeavit eques per Burgundiam : Rodulfus naufragoso navigio usque prope Coloniam. Chron. Abbat. S. Trudon, lib. xii. in Dacher. Spicil. vol. vii. p. 493, 494.

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polluted with an inveterate heresy concerning the body and blood of the Lord. This circumstance induced him to proceed by a different route : and, after encountering sundry hardships and difficulties, he and his companions at length reached Basle. From that place, Alexander, one of the monks, rode on horseback through Burgundy : but the way-worn Abbot himself, tired with his laborious journey through Switzerland, took shipping on the Rhine ; and, after a perilous navigation described in words which imply shipwreck, he landed near Cologne. From this point, striking over the country, I suppose, he would reach his Monastery by a different course from that which Alexander pursued on horseback through Burgundy*.

* Ubi (scil. Romæ) cum, per aliquot dies, moraretur ; et, de apostolico et de his qui circa eum erant, viderent et intelligerent quæ dicta sibi domi credere non vellent : in diversas animi partes ferebantur ; plurimum Rodulfus Abbas, qui sibi bene conscius erat pro quo terram egressus fuerat. Cumque vigilans nocte aliquando jaceret, et die in ecclesiis solus Romæ resideret, diligenti cura et sollicito retractabat animo, quæ peregrinationis suæ fuisset intentio, et de ea revelata religiosi viris quid in itinere dedisset ab eis. Sollicitabat enim eum hoc non parum ad ea quæ cogitaverat, si essent explenda, cuncta ei jam surrepta fuerant necessaria. Præterea terram, ad quam ulterius disposuerat peregrinari, audiēbat pollutam esse inveterata hæresi de corpore et sanguine Domini : sed et, de consilio animæ suæ et eorum qui sibi fuerant commissi, nihil aliud audierat a religiosi viris, nisi quod domi didicerat ex ecclesiastica disciplina et libris communibus tam nobis quam illis. Super hoc accreverat

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ing the body and blood of Christ was avowed and maintained : *the district of the Cottian Alps*, occupied by the Vallenses ; and *the region of Lombardy*, irregularly colonised by the Publicans or Paulicians or Cathari or (as they were afterward called in France) Albigenses. Hence, on the first perusal of the passage in the Chronicle, we might doubt, as to *which* of these two provinces was the polluted country intended by Rodolph.

Both the narrative, however, and the march, of the weary pilgrim, distinctly shew, that he could not have meant Lombardy : for, in order to *avoid* the polluted country, Lombardy *itself* was, in truth, the precise region through which he travelled in his way to Basle.

If, then, negatively, *the province of Lombardy*, sprinkled with Paulicians, could not have been the land described by Rodolph as the polluted country : it can only remain, positively, that the polluted country in question, which the Abbot avoided, was *the Alpine District* inhabited by the Vallenses.

II. These are the conclusions, to which we are brought by the very necessity of the language employed in the Chronicle : and, with them, will exactly agree the respective conditions of the two countries, one or the other of which *must* be the country intended by Rodolph.

The Abbot speaks, not merely of *certain individuals scattered through a country, which in no wise*

generally symbolised with them in doctrine : but he speaks, of a whole country, that is to say, of the entire inhabitants of a whole country, as being polluted to the very core with the alleged heresy.

Accordingly, the large province of Lombardy, including the Milanese, could, with no propriety, be said to have been *itself* thus polluted : for, as we learn from Reinerius, even a century later than the time of Rodolph, the Paulicians had no more than six Churches throughout the whole of *Italy* ; and the amount of the associated members in *Lombardy* scarcely reached two thousand five hundred *.

But the region of the Cottian Alps was altogether tenanted by the Vallenses : so that, with the strictest accuracy, it would be described by Rodolph, as a country so utterly polluted with an inveterate heresy, that, within its recesses, which were likewise in the evil odour of sorcery and witchcraft, he cared not to trust either his person or his orthodoxy.

III. Thus, both geographically and circumstantially, both negatively and positively, we are driven from Lombardy, and are constrained to plant our feet upon the land of the Vallenses.

Hence the testimony of Rodolph will run : that, during the early part of the twelfth century, the

* Reiner. de hæret. c. vi. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 304.

Vallenses still continued to occupy the Valleys of the Cottian Alps ; and that they still persevered in maintaining their inveterate or ancient heresy concerning the body and blood of the Lord.