

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

GIFT OF LAND FOR A PROTESTANT CHURCH AT NAPLES



THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT MAKING OVER TO MESSRS. W. C. STANFORD AND A. SCOTT, CHURCHWARDENS, THE GROUND DECREED BY GARIBALDI AS A GIFT OF THE NATION FOR THE ERECTION OF AN ENGLISH CHURCH

We are enabled to present our readers with a Pictorial Remembrance of one of those events which mark, we trust, the beginning of a new era an era of regeneration and of civil and religious liberty in the south of Italy, Till Garibaldi came to free them, imprisonment and exile were the fate of all Neapolitans who would not worship the Virgin and the images of the Church of Rome; and at Naples not merely were the Jews denied their synagogues, but the religion of even the most favoured Christian nations was so proscribed that neither Russians, nor Germans, nor Swiss, nor English were allowed to have churches or schools of their own, For upwards of thirty three years every effort was no made by the English residents to obtain permission to build a place of worship for themselves; but though in 1834 that permission was granted by the King and his Ministers, and though the foundation -stone for their church was laid by the British Minister, the late Sir W. Temple, yet, in consequence of the bad

faith of the Neapolitan Government and the intolerant laws of the country, the works were on the following morning unceremoniously stopped by the police, and the British residents compelled to conceal their worship and the services of their Church within the precincts of the British Consulate, in a large room hired for the purpose. So determined, however, was the Bourbon Government that Protestant service should be recognized as existing amongst them that no sooner was this room fitted up for a temporary chapel of the public entrance to it from the street was for a temporary chapel of the Church of England than the public entrance to it from the street was walled up by the police, so that none might enter it except through the apartment of the British Consul.

After the arrival of Garibaldi, and the establishment of a liberal Government, the church wardens sent in a petition praying the Dictator to grant the British residents permission to build an English Protestant church, offering to purchase for its site a piece of ground belonging to the military department of the Government in Strada San Pasquale; and on the 23rd of October, 1860, the Dictator Garibaldi made the following decree: - "Grateful for the powerful and generous sympathy of the English, the Dictator considers it but a slight return for so many benefits received from them in favour of the noble cause of Italy to decree - Not only is permission granted to build a church on the territory of this capital to men who worship the same God as the Italians, but they are requested to accept, as a national gift, the small space required for the pious object to which they intend to dedicate it."

The present Government has confirmed the decree, and our Engraving shows the Royal commission, consisting of Commissary General Colonel the Cavaliere Ottavio de Filippis, with his secretary; Captain the Cavaliere Stanislao Mastrobuono, R.E.; and the Town Major, D. Antonio Gamble, signing the necessary deeds upon the ground itself, and making it over to the British residents, represented on this occasion by their churchwardens, Messrs. Stanford and Scott, accompanied by their legal adviser, Don Luigi Spasiano, and by Dr. Strange, Mr. Graham, and Mr. Claulesen. We learn that the residents have already subscribed £1000 and appointed a committee to collect funds and take all other necessary steps for the immediate erection of a church capable of accommodating not only the residents themselves, but also the many travellers and invalids who flock to Naples, and the sailors who frequent its harbour. We trust that the funds they collect may be such as to enable them to erect a building worthy of Garibaldi's decree, and of the gift they have received from the Italian nation.