

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Pilgrimage from the Alps to the Tiber

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Pilgrimage from the Alps to the Tiber

Author: James Aitken Wylie

Release date: March 9, 2009 [eBook #28294]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PILGRIMAGE FROM THE ALPS TO THE
TIBER ***

E-text prepared by Frank van Drogen, Greg Bergquist,
and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team
(<http://www.pgdp.net>)

Transcriber's Note

The punctuation and spelling from the original text have been preserved faithfully. Only obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

PILGRIMAGE
FROM
THE ALPS TO THE TIBER.

PILGRIMAGE
FROM
THE ALPS TO THE TIBER.

OR
THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM
ON
TRADE, JUSTICE, AND KNOWLEDGE.

BY
REV. J.A. WYLIE, LL.D.

EDINBURGH

SHEPHERD & ELLIOT, 15, PRINCES STREET.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

MDCCCLV.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE INTRODUCTION,	1
CHAPTER II.	
THE PASSAGE OF THE ALPS,	8
CHAPTER III.	
RISE AND PROGRESS OF CONSTITUTIONALISM IN PIEDMONT,	23
CHAPTER IV.	
STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS,	43
CHAPTER V.	
STATE AND PROSPECTS OF THE VAUDOIS CHURCH,	62
CHAPTER VI.	
FROM TURIN TO NOVARA—PLAIN OF LOMBARDY,	83
CHAPTER VII.	
FROM NOVARA TO MILAN—DOGANA—CHAIN OF THE ALPS,	94
CHAPTER VIII.	
CITY AND PEOPLE OF MILAN,	105
CHAPTER IX.	
ARCO DELLA PACE—ST AMBROSE,	119
CHAPTER X.	
THE DUOMO OF MILAN,	126
CHAPTER XI.	
MILAN TO BRESCIA—THE REFORMERS,	137
CHAPTER XII.	
THE PRESENT THE IMAGE OF THE PAST,	152
CHAPTER XIII.	
SCENERY OF LAKE GARDA—PESCHIERA—VERONA,	158
CHAPTER XIV.	
FROM VERONA TO VENICE—THE TYROLESE ALPS,	168
CHAPTER XV.	
VENICE—DEATH OF NATIONS,	178

CHAPTER XVI.	
PADUA—ST ANTONY—THE PO—ARREST,	198
CHAPTER XVII.	
FERRARA—RENÉE AND OLYMPIA MORATA,	209
CHAPTER XVIII.	
BOLOGNA AND THE APENNINES,	216
CHAPTER XIX.	
FLORENCE AND ITS YOUNG EVANGELISM,	237
CHAPTER XX.	
FROM LEGHORN TO ROME—CIVITA VECCHIA,	262
CHAPTER XXI.	
MODERN ROME,	276
CHAPTER XXII.	
ANCIENT ROME—THE SEVEN HILLS,	289
CHAPTER XXIII.	
SIGHTS IN ROME—CATACOMBS—PILATE'S STAIRS—PIO NONO, &c.,	302
CHAPTER XXIV.	
INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM ON TRADE,	333
CHAPTER XXV.	
INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM ON TRADE—(CONTINUED),	352
CHAPTER XXVI.	
JUSTICE AND LIBERTY IN THE PAPAL STATES,	366
CHAPTER XXVII.	
EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE PAPAL STATES,	401
CHAPTER XXVIII.	
MENTAL STATE OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN ITALY,	415
CHAPTER XXIX.	
SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC CUSTOMS OF THE ROMANS,	430
CHAPTER XXX.	
THE ARGUMENT FROM THE WHOLE, OR, ROME HER OWN WITNESS,	447

ROME,
AND
THE WORKINGS OF ROMANISM
IN ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

THE INTRODUCTION.

I DID not go to Rome to seek for condemnatory matter against the Pope's government. Had this been my only object, I should not have deemed it necessary to undertake so long a journey. I could have found materials on which to construct a charge in but too great abundance nearer home. The cry of the Papal States had waxed great, and there was no need to go down into those unhappy regions to satisfy one's self that the oppression was "altogether according to the cry of

it." I had other objects to serve by my journey.

There is one other country which has still more deeply influenced the condition of the race, and towards which one is even more powerfully drawn, namely, Judea. But Italy is entitled to the next place, as respects the desire which one must naturally feel to visit it, and the instruction one may expect to reap from so doing. Some of the greatest minds which the pagan world has produced have appeared in Italy. In that land those events were accomplished which have given to modern history its form and colour; and those ideas elaborated, the impress of which may still be traced upon the opinions, the institutions, and the creeds of Europe. In Italy, too, empire has left her ineffaceable traces, and art her glorious footsteps. There is, all will admit, a peculiar and exquisite pleasure in visiting such spots: nor is there pleasure only, but profit also. One's taste may be corrected, and his judgment strengthened, by seeing the masterpieces of ancient genius. New trains of thought may be suggested, and new sources of information opened, by the sight of men and of manners wholly new. But more than this,—I believed that there were lessons to be learned there, which it was emphatically worth one's while going there to learn, touching the working of that politico-religious system of which Italy has so long been the seat and centre. I had previously been at some little pains to make myself acquainted with this system in its principles, and wished to have an opportunity of studying it in its effects upon the government of the country, and the condition of the people, as respects their trade, industry, knowledge, liberty, religion, and general happiness. All I shall say in the following pages will have a bearing, more or less direct, upon this main point.

[Pg 2]

It is impossible to disjoin the present of these countries from the past; nor can the solemn and painful enigma which they exhibit be unriddled but by a reference to the past, and that not the immediate, but the remote past. There is truth, no doubt, in the saying of the old moralist, that nations lose in moments what they had acquired in years; but the remark is applicable rather to the accelerated speed with which the last stages of a nation's ruin are accomplished, than to the slow and imperceptible progress which usually marks its commencement. Unless when cut off by the sudden stroke of war, it requires five centuries at least to consummate the fall of a great people. One must pass, therefore, over those hideous abuses which are the immediate harbingers of national disaster, and which exclusively engross the attention of ordinary inquirers, and go back to those remote ages, and those minute and apparently insignificant causes, amid which national declension, unsuspected often by the nation itself, takes its rise. The destiny of modern Europe was sealed so long ago as A.D. 606, when the Bishop of Rome was made head of the universal Church by the edict of a man stained with the double guilt of usurpation and murder. Religion is the parent of liberty. The rise of tyrants can be prevented in no other way but by maintaining the supremacy of God and conscience; and in the early corruptions of the gospel, the seeds were sown of those frightful despotisms which have since arisen, and of those tremendous convulsions which are now rending society. The evil principle implanted in the European commonwealth in the seventh century appeared to lie dormant for ages; but all the while it was busily at work beneath those imposing imperial structures which arose in the middle ages. It had not been cast out of the body politic; it was still there, operating with noiseless but resistless energy and terrible strength; and while monarchs were busily engaged founding empires and consolidating their rule, it was preparing to signalize, at a future day, the superiority of its own power by the sudden and ir retrievable overthrow of theirs. Thus society had come to resemble the lofty mountain, whose crown of white snows and robe of fresh verdure but conceal those hidden fires which are smouldering within its bowels. Under the appearance of robust health, a moral cancer was all the while preying upon the vitals of society, eating out by slow degrees the faith, the virtue, the obedience of the world. The ground at last gave way, and thrones and hierarchies came tumbling down. Look at the Europe of our day. What is the Papacy, but an enormous cancer, of most deadly virulency, which has now run its course, and done its work upon the nations of the Continent. The European community, from head to foot, is one festering sore. Soundness in it there is none. The Papal world is a wriggling mass of corruption and suffering. It is a compound of tyrannies and perjuries,—of lies and blood-red murders,—of crimes abominable and unnatural,—of priestly maledictions, socialist ravings, and atheistic blasphemies. The whine of mendicants, the curses, groans, and shrieks of victims, and the demoniac laughter of tyrants, commingle in one hoarse roar. Faugh! the spectacle is too horrible to be looked at; its effluvia is too fetid to be endured. What is to be done with the carcase? We cannot dwell in its neighbourhood. It would be impossible long to inhabit the same globe with it: its stench were enough to pollute and poison the atmosphere of our planet. It must be buried or burned. It cannot be allowed to remain on the surface of the earth: it would breed a plague, which would infect, not a world only, but a universe. It is in this direction that we are to seek for instruction; and here, if we are able to receive it, thirty generations are willing to impart to us their dear-bought experience. Lessons which have cost the world so much are surely worth learning.

[Pg 3]

[Pg 4]

But I do not mean to treat my readers to lectures on history, instead of chapters on travel. It is not an abstract disquisition on the influence of religion and government, such as one might compose without stirring from his own fire-side, which I intend to write. It is a real journey we are about to undertake. You shall have facts as well as reflections,—incidents as well as disquisitions. I shall be grave,—as who would not at the sight of fallen nations?—but "when time shall serve there shall be smiles." You shall climb the Alps; and when their tops begin to burn at sunrise, you shall join heart and song with the music of the shepherd's horn, and the thunder of a

[Pg 5]

thousand torrents, as they rush headlong down amid crags and pine-forests from the icy summits. You shall enter, with pilgrim feet, the gates of proud capitals, where puissant kings once reigned, but have passed away, and have left no memorial on earth, save a handful of dust in a stone-coffin, or a half-legible name on some mouldering arch. The solemn and stirring voice of Monte Viso, speaking from the midst of the Cottian Alps, will call you from afar to the martyr-land of Europe. You shall worship with the Waldenses beneath their own Castelluzzo, which covers with its mighty shadow the ashes of their martyred forefathers, and the humble sanctuary of their living descendants. You shall count the towns and campaniles on the broad Lombardy. You shall pass glorious days on the top of renowned cathedrals, and sit and muse in the face of the eternal Alps, as the clouds now veil, now reveal, their never-trodden snows. You shall cross the Lagunes, and see the winged lion of St Mark soaring serenely amid the bright domes and the ever calm seas of Venice, where you may list

"The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
Mellowed by distance, o'er the waters sweep."

You shall travel long sleepless nights in the *diligence*, and be ferried at day-break over "ancient rivers." You shall tread the grass-grown streets of Ferrara, and the deserted halls of Bologna, where the wisdom-loving youth of Europe erst assembled, but whose solitude now is undisturbed, save by the clank of the Croat's sabre, or the wine-flagon of the friar. You shall visit cells dim and dank, around which genius has thrown a halo which draws thither the pilgrim, who would rather muse in the twilight of the naked vault, than wander amid the marble glories of the palace that rises proudly in its neighbourhood. You shall go with me, at the hour of vespers, to aisled cathedrals, which were ages a-building, and the erection of which swallowed up the revenues of provinces,—beneath whose roof, ample enough to cover thousands and tens of thousands, you may see a solitary priest, singing a solemn dirge over a "Religion" fallen as a dominant belief, and existing only as a military organization; while statues, mute and solemn, of mailed warriors, grim saints, angels and winged cherubs, ranged along the walls, are the only companions of the surpliced man, if we except a few beggars pressing with naked knees the stony floor. You shall see Florence,—

"The brightest star of star-bright Italy."

You shall be stirred by the craggy grandeur of the Apennines, and soothed by the living green of the Tuscan vales, with their hoar castles, their olives, their dark cypresses, and their forests,—

"Where beside his leafy hold
The sullen boar hath heard the distant horn,
And whets his tusks against the gnarled thorn."

You shall taste the vine of Italy, and drink the waters of the Arno. You shall wander over ancient battle-fields, encounter the fierce Apennine blast, and be rocked on the Mediterranean wave, which the sirocco heaps up, huge and dark, and pours in a foaming cataract upon the strand of Italy. Finally, we shall tread together the sackcloth plain on which Rome sits, with the leaves of her torn laurel and the fragments of her shivered sceptre strewn around her, waiting with discrowned and downcast head the bolt of doom. Entering the gates of the "seven-hilled city," we shall climb the Capitol, and survey a scene which has its equal nowhere on the earth. Mouldering arches, fallen columns, buried palaces, empty tombs, and slaves treading on the dust of the conquerors of the world, are all that now remain of Imperial Rome. What a scene of ruin and woe! When the twilight falls, and the moon begins to climb the eastern arch, mark how the Coliseum projects, as if in pity, its mighty shadow across the Forum, and covers with its kindly folds the mouldering trophies of the past, and draws its mantle around the nakedness of the Cæsars' palace, as if to screen it from the too curious eye of the visitor. Rome, what a history is thine! One other tragedy, terrible as befits the drama it closes, and the curtain will drop in solemn, and, it may be, eternal silence.

CHAPTER II.

THE PASSAGE OF THE ALPS.

The Rhone—Plains of Dauphiny—Mont Blanc and the "Reds"—Landscape by Night—Democratic Club in the *Diligence*—Approach the Alps—Festooned Vines—Begin the Ascent—Chamberry—Uses of War—An Alpine Valley—Sudden Alternations of Beauty and Grandeur—Travellers—Evening—Grandeur of Sunset—Supper at Lanslebourg—Cross the Summit at Midnight—Morning—Sunrise among the Alps—Descent—Italy.

IT was wearing late on an evening of early October 1851 when I crossed the Rhone on my way to the Alps. It had rained heavily during the day, and sombre clouds still rested on the towers of Lyons behind me. The river was in flood, and the lamps on the bridge threw a troubled gleam upon the impetuous current as it rolled underneath. It was impossible not to recollect that this was the stream on the banks of which Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, himself the disciple of John, had, at almost the identical spot where I crossed it, laboured and prayed, and into the

floods of which had been flung the ashes of the first martyrs of Gaul. These murky skies formed no very auspicious commencement of my journey; but I cherished the hope that to-morrow would bring fair weather, and with fair weather would come the green valleys and gleaming tops of the Alps, and, the day after, the sunny plains of Italy. This fair vision beckoned me on through the deep road and the scudding shower.

[Pg 9]

We struck away into the plains of Dauphiny,—those great plains that stretch from the Rhone to the Alps, and which offer to the eye, as seen from the heights that overhang Lyons, a vast and varied expanse of wood and meadow, corn-field and vineyard, city and hamlet, with the snowy pile of Mont Blanc rising afar in the horizon. On the previous evening I had climbed these heights, so stately and beautiful, with convents hanging on their sides, and a chapel to Mary crowning their summit, to renew my acquaintance, after an interval of some years' absence, with the monarch of the Alps. I was greatly pleased to find, especially in these times, that my old friend had not grown "red." Since I saw him last, changes not a few had passed upon Europe, and more than one monarch had fallen; but Mont Blanc sat firmly in his seat, and wore his icy crown as proudly as ever.

Since my former visit to Lyons the "Reds" had made great progress in all the countries at the foot of the Alps. Their party had been especially progressive in Lyons; so much so as to affect the nomenclature of the hills that overlook that city on the north. That hill, which is nearly wholly covered with the houses and workshops of the silk-weavers, is now known as the "red mountain," its inhabitants being mostly of that faction; while the hill on the west of it, that, namely, which I had ascended on the evening before, and which is chiefly devoted to ecclesiastical persons and uses, is called the "white mountain." But while men had been changing their faith, and hills their names, Mont Blanc stood firmly by his old creed and his old colours. There he was, dazzlingly, transcendently white, defying the fuller's art to whiten him, and shading into dimness the snowy robe of the priest; looking with royal majesty over his wide realm; standing unchanged in the midst of a theatre of changes; abiding for ever, though kingdoms at his feet were passing away; pre-eminent in grace and glory amidst his princely peers; and looking the earthly type of that eternal and all-glorious One, who stands supreme and unapproachable amid the powers, dominions, and royalties of the universe.

[Pg 10]

The night wore on without any noticeable event, or any special interruption, save what was occasioned necessarily by our arrival at the several stages, and the changes consequent thereon of horses and postilions. There was a rag of a moon overhead,—at least so one might judge from the hazy light that struggled through the fog,—by the help of which I kept watching the landscape till past midnight. Then a spirit of drowsiness invaded me. It was not sleep, but sleep's image, or sleep's counterfeit,—an uneasy trance, in which a confused vision of tall trees, with their head in the clouds, and very long and very narrow fields, marked off by straight rows of very upright poplars, and large heavy-looking houses, with tall antique roofs, kept marching past, without variety and without end. I would wake up at times and look out. There was the same picture before me. I would fall back into my trance again, and, an hour or so after, I would again wake up; still the identical picture was there. I could not persuade myself that the *diligence* had moved from the spot, despite the rumbling of its wheels and the jingling of the horses' bells. All night long the same changeless picture kept moving on and on, ever passing, yet never past.

I may be said to have crossed the Alps amid a torrent of curses. My place was in the *banquette*, the roomiest and loftiest part of the lofty *diligence*, and which, perched in front, and looking down upon the inferior compartments of the *diligence*, much as the attics of a three-storey house look down upon the lower suits of apartments, commands a fine view of the country, when it is daylight and clear weather. There sat next me in the *banquette* a young Savoyard, who travelled with us as far as Chamberry, in the heart of the Alps; and on the other side of the Savoyard sat the *conducteur*. This last was a Piedmontese, a young, clever, obliging fellow, with a voluble tongue, and a keen dark eye in his head. Scarce had we extricated ourselves from the environs of Lyons, or had got beyond the reach of the guns that look so angrily down upon it from the heights, till these two broke into a conversation on politics. The conversation soon warmed into an energetic and vehement discussion, or philippic I should rather say. Their discourse was far too rapid, and I was too unfamiliar with the language in which it was uttered to do more than gather its scope and drift. But I could hear the names of France and Austria repeated every other sentence; and these names were sure to be followed by a volley of curses, fierce, scornful, and defiant. Austria was cursed,—France was cursed: they were cursed individually,—they were cursed conjunctly,—once, again, and a hundred times. What were the politics of the passengers in the other compartments of the diligence I know not; but little did they wot that they had a democratic club overhead, and that more treason was spouted that night in their company than might have got us all into trouble, had there been any eavesdropper in any corner of the vehicle. When I chanced to awake, they were still at it. The harsh grating sound of the anathemas haunted me during my sleep even. It was like a rattling hail-shower, or like the continuous corruscations of lightning,—the lightning of the Alps. Had it been possible for the authorities to know but a tithe of what was spoken that night by my two neighbours, their journey would have been short: they would have been shot at the next station, to a certainty.

[Pg 11]

[Pg 12]

With the night, the dream-like landscape, and the maledictory harangues which had haunted me during the darkness, passed away, and the morning found us nearing the mountains. The Alps

open upon you by little. One who has never climbed these hills imagines himself standing at their feet, and looking up the long unbroken vista of fields, vineyards, forests, and naked rocks, to the eternal snows of their summit. Not so. They do not come marching thus upon you in all their grandeur to overwhelm you. To see them thus, you must stand afar off,—at least fifty miles away. There you can take in the whole at a glance, from the beauteous fringe of stream, and hamlet, and woodland, that skirts their base, to the white serrated line that cuts so sharply the blue of the firmament. Nearer them,—unless, indeed, in the great central valleys, where you can see the icy fields hanging in the firmament at an awful distance above you,—their snow-clad summits are invisible, being hidden by an intervening sea of ridges, that are strewn over with rocks, or wave darkly with pines.

As we approached the mountains, they offered to the eye a beauteous chain of verdant hills, with the morning mists hanging on their sides. The torrents were in flood from the recent rains; the woods had the rich tints of autumn upon them; but the charm of the scene lay in the beautiful festoonings of the vine. The uplands before me were barred by what I at first took to be long horizontal layers of fleecy cloud. On a nearer approach, these turned out to be the long branchy arms of the vine. The vine-stock is made to lean against the cut trunk of a chestnut or poplar tree, and its branches are bent horizontally, and extended till they meet those of the neighbouring vine-stock, which have been similarly dealt with. In this way, continuous lines of luxuriant foliage, with pendulous blood-red clusters in their season, may be made to run for miles together along the hill-side. There might be from thirty to forty parallel lines in those I now saw. Tinted with the morning sun, and relieved against the deep verdure of the mountain, they appeared like stripes of amber, or floating lines of cloud fringed with gold.

[Pg 13]

It was the Mont Cenis route I was traversing,—the least rugged of all the passes of the Alps, and the same by which Hannibal, as some suppose, passed into Italy. The day cleared up into one of unusual brilliancy. We began to ascend by a path cut in the rock of the mountain, having on our left an escarpment of limestone several hundred feet high, and on our right a deep gorge, with a white foaming torrent at its bottom. The frontier chain passed, we descended into a rich valley, with a fine stream flowing through it, and the poor town of Les Echelles hiding from view in one of its angles. These noble valleys are sadly blotted by filth and disease. The contrast offered betwixt the noble features of nature and the degraded form of man is painful and humiliating. Bowed down by toil, stolid with ignorance, disfigured with the goitre, struck with cretinism, the miserable beings around you do more to sadden you than all that the bright air and glorious hills can do to exhilarate you.

The valley where we now were was a complete *cul de sac*. It was walled in all round by limestone hills of great height, and the eye sought in vain for visible outlet. At length one could see a white line running half-way up the mountain's face, and ending in an opening no bigger than a pigeon-hole. We slowly climbed this road,—for road it was; and when we came to the diminutive opening we had seen from the valley below, it expanded into a tunnel,—one of the great works of Napoleon,—which ran right through the mountain, and brought us out on the other side. We now traversed a narrow and rocky ravine, which at length expanded into a magnificent valley, rich in vines and fruit-trees of all kinds, and overhung by lofty mountains. On this plain, surrounded by the living grandeur of nature, and the faded renown of its monastic and archiepiscopal glory, and half-buried amid foliage and ruins, sits Chamberry, the capital of Savoy.

[Pg 14]

At Chamberry our route underwent a change. Beauty now gave place to grandeur; but still a grandeur blended with scenes of exquisite loveliness. These I cannot stay to describe at length. The whole day was passed in winding and climbing among the hills. We toiled slowly to rise above the plains we had left, and to approach the region where winter spreads out her boundless sea of ice and snow. We followed the magnificent road which we owe to the genius of Napoleon. The fruits of Marengo are gone. Austerlitz is but a name. But the passes of the Alps remain. "When will it be ready for the transport of the cannon?" enquired Napoleon respecting the Simplon road. War is a rough pioneer; but without such a pioneer to clear the way the world would stand still. Look back. What do you see throughout the successive ages? War, with his red eye, his iron feet, and his gleaming brand, marching in the van; and commerce, and arts, and Christianity, following in the wake of this blood-besmeared Anakim. Such has ever been the order of procession. Mankind in the mass are a sluggish race, and will march only when the word of command is sounded from iron-throated, hoarse-voiced war. Look at the Alps. What do you see? A gigantic form, busy amid the blinding tempests and the eternal ice of their summits. With herculean might he rends the rocks and levels the mountains. Who is he, and what does he there? That is war, in the person of Napoleon, hewing a path through rocks and glaciers, for the passage of the Bible and the missionary. Under the reign of the Mediator the promise to Christianity is, All is yours. War is yours, and Peace is yours.

[Pg 15]

As we passed on, innumerable nooks of beauty opened to the eye, and romantic peaks ever and anon shot up before us. Now the path led along a meadow, with its large bright flowers; and now along the brink of an Alpine river, with its worn bed and tumultuous floods. Now it rounded the shoulder of a hill; and now it lost itself in some frightful gorge, where the overhanging mountain, with its drapery of pine forests, made it dark as midnight almost. You emerge into daylight again, and begin the same succession of green meadow, pine-clad hill, foaming torrent, and black gorge. Thus you go onward and upward. At length white Alps begin to look down upon

you, and give you warning that you are nearing those central regions where eternal winter holds his seat amid pinnacles of ice and wastes of snow.

Let us take an individual picture. The road has made a sudden turn; and a valley, hitherto concealed by the mountains, opens unexpectedly. It is some three or four miles long; and the road traverses it straight as the arrow's flight, till it loses itself amid the rocks and foliage at the bottom of the mountain which you see lying across the valley. On this hand is a stream of water, clear as crystal; on that is the ridgy, wavy, lofty mass of a purple Alp. The bright air and light incorporate, as it were, with the substance of the mountain, and spiritualize it, so that it looks of mould intermediate betwixt the earth and the firmament. The path is bordered with the most delicious verdure, fresh and soft as a carpet, and freckled with the dancing shadows of the trees. On this hand is a chalet, with a vine climbing its wall and mantling its doorway; on that is a verdant knoll, planted a-top with chestnut trees; and from amidst their rich, massy foliage, the little spire of the church, with its glittering vane, looks forth. Near it is the curé's house, buried amidst flower-blossoms, the foliage of vines, and the shadows of the sycamore and chestnut. There is not a spot in the little valley which beauty has not clothed and decked with the most painstaking care; while grandeur has built up a wall all round, as if to keep out the storms that sometimes rage here. It looks so quiet and tranquil, and is so shut in from the great world outside, that one thinks of it as a spot which happy beings from another sphere might come to visit, and where he might list the melody of their voices, as they walk at even-tide amid the bowers of this earthly Eden.

[Pg 16]

The road makes another turn, and the scene is changed in a moment,—in the twinkling of an eye. The happy valley is gone,—it has vanished like a dream; and a scene of stern, savage, overpowering sublimity rises before you. Alp is piled upon Alp, chasms yawn, torrents growl, jutting rocks threaten; and far over head is the dark pine forest, amid which you can descry, perhaps, the frozen billows of the glacier, or have glimpses of those still higher and drearier regions where winter sits on her eternal throne, and holds undivided sway. Your farther progress is completely barred. So it looks. A cyclopean wall rises from earth to heaven. The gate of rock by which you entered seems to have closed its ponderous jaws behind you, and shut you in,—there to remain till some supernatural power rend the mountains and give you egress. The mood of mind changes with the scene. The beauty soothed and softened you; now you grow impulsive and stern. The awful forms around you blend with the soul, as it were, and impart something of their own vastness to it. You feel yourself carried into the very presence of that Power which sank the foundations of the mountains in the depths of the earth, and built up their giant masses above the clouds; which hung the avalanche on their brow, clove their unfathomable abysses, poured the river at their feet, and taught the forked lightning to play around their awful icy steeps. You seem to hear the sound of the Almighty's footsteps still echoing amid these hills. There passes before you the shadow of Omnipotence; and a great voice seems to proclaim the Godhead of Him "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance."

[Pg 17]

The road was comparatively solitary. We passed at times a waggoner, who was conveying the produce of the plains to some village among the mountains; and then a couple of pedestrians, with the air of tradesmen, on their way perhaps to a Swiss town to seek employment; and next a cowherd, driving home his herds from the glades of the forest; and now an occasional gendarme would present himself, and force you to remember, what you would willingly have forgotten amid such scenes, that there were such things as armies in the world; and sometimes the long, dark figure of the curé, reading his breviary to economize time, might be seen gliding along before you, representative of the murky superstition that still fills these valleys, and which, indeed, you can read in the stolid face of the Savoyard, as he sits listlessly under the broad easings of his cottage roof.

Anon the evening came, walking noiselessly upon the mountains, and shedding on the spirit a not unpleasant melancholy. The Alps seemed to grow taller. Deep masses of shade were projected from summit to summit. Pine forest, and green vale, and dashing torrent, and quiet hamlet, all retired from view, as if they wished to go to sleep beneath the friendly shadows. A deep and reverent silence stole over the Alps, as if the stillness of the firmament had descended upon them. Over all nature was shed this spirit of quiet and profound tranquillity. Every tree was motionless. The murmur of the brook, the wing of the bird, the creak of our diligence, the voices of the postilion and *conducteur*, all felt the softening influence of the hour.

[Pg 18]

But mark! what glory is this which begins to burn upon the crest of the snowy Alps? First there comes a flood of rosy light, and then a deep bright crimson, like the ruby's flash or the sapphire's blaze, and then a circlet of flaming peaks studs the horizon. It looks as if a great conflagration were about to begin. But suddenly the light fades, and piles of cold, pale white rise above you. You can scarce believe them to be the same mountains. But, quick as the lightning, the flash comes again. A flood of glory rolls once more along their summits. It is a last and mighty blaze. You feel as if it were a struggle for life,—as if it were a war waged by the spirits of darkness against these celestial forms. The struggle is over: the darkness has prevailed. These mighty mountain torches are extinguished one after one; and cold, ghastly piles, of sepulchral hue, which you shiver to look up at, and which remind you of the dead, rise still and calm in the

firmament above you. You feel relieved when darkness interposes its veil betwixt you and them. The night sets in deep, and calm, and beautiful, with troops of stars overhead. The voice of streams, all night long, fills the silent hills with melodious echoes.

We now threaded the black gorge of the Arc, passing, unperceived in the darkness, Fort Lesseillon, which, erecting its tiers of batteries above this tremendous natural fosse, looks like a mailed warrior guarding the entrance to Italy. It was eleven o'clock, and we were toiling up the mountain. We had left all human habitations far below, as we thought, when suddenly we were startled by a peal of village bells. Never had bells sounded sweeter in my fancy than those I now heard in these dreary regions. These were the convent bells of the little village of Lanslebourg, which lies at the foot of the summit of the Mont Cenis. Here we were to sup. It was a sort of Arbour in the midst of the hill Difficulty, where we Pilgrims might refresh ourselves before beginning our last and steepest ascent. It was a most substantial repast, as all suppers in that part of the world are; and we had the pleasure of thinking that we were perhaps the highest supper party in Europe. It was our last meal before crossing the mountain, and passing from the modern to the ancient world; for the ridge of the Alps is the limit that divides the two. On this side are modern times; on that are the dark ages. You retrograde five full centuries when you step across the line. We ate our supper, as did the Israelites their last meal in Egypt, with our loins girded,—scarce even our greatcoats put off, and our staff in our hand.

[Pg 19]

Now for the summit. We started at midnight. Above us was an ebon vault, studded thick with large bright stars. Around us was the awful silence of the mountains. The night was luminous; for in that elevated region darkness is unknown, save when the storm-cloud shrouds it. Of our party, some betook them to the diligence, and were carried over asleep; others of us, leaving the vehicle to follow the road, which zig-zags up to the summit, addressed ourselves to the old route, which winds steeply upward, now through forests of stunted firs, now over a matting of thick, short grass, and now over the bare debris-strewn scalp of the mountain. The convent bells followed us with their sweet chimes up the hill, and formed a link between us and the living world below. The echoes of our voices were strangely loud. They rung out in the thin elastic air, as if all we said had been caught up and repeated by some invisible being,—some genius of the mountains. The hours wore away; and so delighted were we with the novelty of our position,—climbing the summits of the Alps at midnight,—that they seemed but so many minutes.

[Pg 20]

Ere we were aware, the night was past, and the dawn came upon us; and with the dawn, new and stupendous glories burst forth. How fresh and holy the young day, as it drew aside the curtains of the east, and smiled upon the mountains! The valleys were buried under a fathomless ocean of haze; but the pearly light, sown by the rosy hand of morn, fringed the mountain ridges, and a multitudinous sea of silvery waves spread out around us. The dawn stole on, waxing momentarily; and the great white Alps, which had been standing all night around us so silent, and cold, and sepulchral-like, in their snowy shrouds, now began to grow palpable and less dream-like. The stars put out their fires as the pure crystal light mounted into the sky. Each successive scene was lovely,—inexpressibly lovely,—but momentary. We wished we could have stereotyped it till we had had time to admire it; but while we were gazing it had passed and was gone, like the other glories of the world. But, lo! the sun is near. Mighty torch-bearers run before his chariot, and cry to the rocks, the pine-forests, the torrents, the glaciers, the vine-clad vales, the flower-enamelled glades, the rivers, the cities, that their king is coming. Awake and worship! A mighty Alp, whose loftier stature or more favourable position gives it the start of all the others, has caught the first ray; and suddenly, as if an invisible hand had kindled it, it rises into the firmament, a pyramid of flame, soft, mild, yet gloriously bright, like a dome of living sapphire. While you gaze, another flashes upon you, and another, and another, and at length the whole horizon is filled with gigantic pyres. The stupendous vision has risen so suddenly, that you almost look if you may see the seraph which has flown round and kindled these mighty torches. The glory is inexpressible, and on a scale so vast, that you have no words to describe it. You can scarce believe it to be reflected light which gives such glory to these mountains. They are so rosy, so vividly, intensely radiant, that you feel as if that boundless effulgence emanated from themselves,—were flowing forth from some hidden fountain of light within. It is like no other scene of earthly glory you ever saw. You can compare it only to some celestial city which has been let down from the firmament upon the tops of the mountains, with its glittering turrets, its domes of sapphire, and its wall of alabaster, needing no sun or other source of earthly light to enlighten and glorify it. But while you gaze, it is gone. The sun is up, and the mighty mountain-torches which had carried the tidings of his coming to the countries beneath are extinguished.

[Pg 21]

It was now full day, and we had reached the summit of the pass. Above us were still the snow-clad peaks; but the road does not ascend higher. We now crossed the frontier, and were in Italy. A little rocky plain surrounded by weather-beaten peaks, a deep blue lake, and a sea of bare ridges in front, were all that we saw of Italy. The road now began sensibly to decline, and the diligence quickened its pace. We soon reached the ridges before us, and began to descend over the brow of the Alps, which are steep and perpendicular as a wall almost, on their southern side. You first traverse a region covered with immense lichen-clothed boulders; next come stretches of heath; then stunted firs: by and by fruit and forest trees begin to make their appearance; next comes the lovely acacia; and last of all the vine, tall and luxuriant, veiling the peasant's cot with its shadow. The road is literally a series of hanging stairs, which zig-zag down the face of the

[Pg 22]

mountain. At certain points the rock is perforated; at others it is hewn into terraces; and at others the path rests on vast substructions of masonry. Now an immense rock leans over the road, and now you find yourself on the edge of some frightful precipice, with the gulph running right down many thousands of feet, and a white torrent at the bottom, boiling and struggling, but unable to make itself heard at that height on the mountain. The turns are frequent and sharp; and the heavy, overladen vehicle, in its furious downward career, gives a swing at each, as if it would cut short the passage into Italy, and land the passenger, sooner than he wishes, at the bottom. At length, after four hours' riding, the descent is accomplished. The scene has changed in the twinkling of an eye. The plain is as level as a floor. The warm sun,—the brilliant sky,—the luxuriant vines,—the handsome architecture,—the picturesque costumes,—the dark oval faces, and black fiery eyes of the natives,—all tell you that it is a new world into which you have entered,—that this is ITALY.

CHAPTER III.

[Pg 23]

RISK AND PROGRESS OF CONSTITUTIONALISM IN PIEDMONT.

First Entrance into Italy—Never can be Repeated—The Cathedral of Turin—The Royal Palace—The Museum—Egyptian Mummies—Reflections—Landmark of the Vaudois Valleys—Piedmontese House of Commons—Piedmontese Constitution—Perils that surrounded it—Providentially shielded from these—Numbers and Wealth of the Priesthood—Want of Public Opinion—Rise of a Free Press—Its Power—The *Gazetta del Popolo*—The Bible quoted by the Journalists—The flourishing State of the Country—The Waldensian Temple and Congregation—Workmen's Clubs—The Capuchin Monastery—A Capuchin Friar—Sunset.

ONE can enter Italy for the first time only once. For, however often we may climb the Alps, and tread the land that lies stretched out at their base, it is with a cold pulse, compared with the fever of excitement into which we are thrown by the first touch of that soil. The charm is flown; the tree of knowledge has been plucked; and never more can we taste the dreamy yet intense delight which attended the first unfolding of the gates of the Alps, and the first rising of the fair vision of Italy.

In truth, the Italy which one comes to see on his second visit is not the Italy that first drew him across the Alps. That was the Italy of history, or rather of his own imagination. The fair form his fancy was wont to conjure up, draped in the glowing recollections of empire and of arms, and encompassed with the halo of heroic deeds, he can see no more. There meets him, on the other side of the Alps, a vision very unlike this. The Italy of the Cæsars is gone; and where she sat is now a poor, naked, cowering thing, with a chain upon her arm,—the Italy of the Popes. But the fascination attends the traveller some short way into that land. Indeed, he is loath to lose it, and would rather see Italy through the warm colourings of history, and the bright hues of his own fancy, than look upon her as she is.

[Pg 24]

I shall never forget the intense excitement that thrilled me when I found myself rolling along on the magnificent avenue of pollard-elms, that runs all the way from Rivoli to Turin. The voluptuous air, which seemed to fill the landscape with a dreamy gaiety; the intense sunlight, which tinted every object with extraordinary brilliancy, from the bright leaves overhead, to the burning domes of Turin in front; the dark eyes of the natives, which flashed with a fervour like that of their own sun; the Alps towering above me, and running off in a vast unbroken line of glittering masses,—all contributed to form a picture of so novel and brilliant a kind, that it absolutely produced an intoxication of delight.

I passed a few days at Turin; and the pleasure of my stay was much enhanced by the society of my friend the Rev. John Bonar, whom I had met at Chamberry, *en route*, with his family, for Malta. We visited together the chief objects of interest in the capital of Piedmont. The churches we saw of course. And though we had been carried blindfolded across the Alps, and set down in the cathedral of Turin, the statuary alone would have told us that we were in Italy. The most unpractised eye could see at once the difference betwixt these statues and those of the Transalpine churches. The Italian sculptors seemed to possess some secret by which they could make the marble live. Some half-dozen of priests, with red copes (I presume it was a martyr's day, for on such days the Church's dress is red), ranged in a pew near the altar, were singing psalms. Whether the good men were thinking of their dinner, I knew not; but they yawned portentously, wrung their hands with an air of helplessness, and looked at us as if they half expected that we would volunteer to do duty for an hour or so in their stead. A bishop chanting his psalter under the groined roof of cathedral, and a covenanter praying in his hill-side cave, would form an admirable picture of two very different styles of devotion. There were some dozen of old women on the floor, whom the mixed motive of saying their prayers and picking up a chance alms seemed to have drawn thither. From the Duomo we went to the King's palace. We walked through a suit of splendid apartments, though not quite accordant in their style of ornament and comfort with our English ideas. The floor and roof were of rich and beautiful mosaics; the walls were adorned with the more memorable battles of the Sardinian nation; and

[Pg 25]

the furniture was minutely and elaborately inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Three rooms more particularly attracted my attention. The first contained the throne of the kings of Savoy,—a gilded chair, under a crimson canopy, and surrounded by a gilt railing. I thought, as I gazed upon it, how often the power of that throne had lain heavily upon the poor Waldenses. The other room contained the bed on which King Charles Albert died. It is yet in my readers' recollection, that Charles Albert died at Oporto; but the whole furniture of the room in which he breathed his last was transported, together with his ashes, to Turin. It was an affecting sight. There it stood, huddled into a corner,—a poor bed of boards, with a plain coverlet, such as a Spanish peasant might sleep beneath; a chest of deal drawers; and a few of the necessary utensils of a sick chamber. The third room contained the Queen's bed of state. Its windows opened sweetly upon the fine gardens of the palace, where the first ray, as it slants downwards from the crest of the Alps into the valley of the Po, falls on the massy foliage of the mulberry and the orange. On the table were some six or eight books, among which was a copy of the Psalms of David. "It is very fine," said my friend Mr Bonar, glancing up at the gilded canopy and silken hangings of the bed, and poking his hand at the same time into its soft woolly furnishings, "but nothing but blankets can make it comfortable."

[Pg 26]

From the palace we passed to the Museum. There you see pictures, statues, coins stamped with the effigies of kings that lived thousands of years ago, and papyrus parchments inscribed with the hieroglyphics of old Egypt, and other curiosities, which it has required ages to collect, as it would volumes to describe. Not the least interesting sight there is the gods of Egypt,—cats, ibises, fish, monkeys, heads of calves and bulls, all lying in their original swathings. I looked narrowly at these divinities, but could detect no difference betwixt the god-cat of Egypt and the cats of our day. Were it possible to re-animate one of them, and make it free of our streets, I fear the god would be mistaken for an ordinary quadruped of its own kind, pelted and worried by mischievous boys and dogs, as other cats are. I do not know that a modern priest of Turin has any very good ground for taunting an old Egyptian priest with his cat-worship. If it is impossible to tell the difference betwixt a cat which is simply a cat, and a cat which is a god, it is just as impossible to tell the difference betwixt a bread-wafer which is simply bread, and a bread-wafer which is the flesh and blood, the soul and divinity, of Christ.

[Pg 27]

Seeing in Egypt the gods died, it will not surprise the reader that in Egypt men should die. And there they lay, the brown sons and daughters of Mizraim, side by side with their gods, wrapt with them in the same stoney, dreamless slumber. One mummy struck me much. It lay in a stone sarcophagus, the same in which the hands of wife or child mayhap had placed it; and there it had slept on undisturbed through all the changes and hubbub of four thousand years. Over the face was drawn a thin cloth, through which the features could be seen not indistinctly. Now, thought I, I shall hear all about old Egypt. Perhaps this man has seen Joseph, or talked with Jacob, or witnessed the wonders of the exodus. Come, tell me your name or profession, or some of the strange events of your history. Did you don the mail-coat of the warrior, or the white robe of the priest? Did you till the ground, and live on garlic; or were you owner of a princely estate, and went to sit on your house-top of evenings, enjoying the delicious twilight, and the soft flow of the Nile? Come now, tell me all. The door of a departed world seemed about to open. I felt as if standing on its threshold, and looking in upon the shadowy forms that peopled it. But ah! these lips spoke not. With the Rosetta stone as the key, I could compel the granite slabs and the brown worn parchments around me to give up their secrets. But where was the key that could open that breast, and read the secrets locked up in it?

And this form had still a living owner! This awoke a train of thought yet more solemn. Who, what, and where is he? Anxious as I had been to have the door of that mysterious past in which he had lived opened to me, I was yet more anxious to look into that more mysterious and awful future into which he had gone. What had he seen and felt these four thousand years? Did the ages seem long to him, or was it but as a few days since he left the earth? I went close up to the dark curtain, but there was no opening,—no chink by which I could see into the world beyond. Will no kind hand draw the veil aside but for a moment? There it has hung unlifted age after age, concealing, with its impenetrable folds, all that mortals would most like to know. Myriads and myriads have passed within, but not one has ever given back voice, or look, or sign, to those they left behind, and from whom never before did they conceal thought or wish. Why is this? Do they not still think of us? Do they not still love us? Would they softly speak to us if they could? What gulf divides them? Ah! how silent are the dead!

[Pg 28]

Close by the great highway into Italy lie the "Valleys of the Vaudois." One might pass them without being aware of their near presence, or that he was treading upon holy ground;—so near to the world are they, and yet so completely hidden from it. Ascend the little hill on the south of Turin, and follow with your eye the great wall of the Alps which bounds the plain on the north. There, in the west, about thirty miles from where you stand, is a tall pyramidal-shaped mountain, towering high above the other summits. That is Monte Viso, which rises like a heaven-erected beacon, to signify from afar to the traveller the land of the Waldenses, and to call him, with its solemn voice, to turn aside and see the spot where "the bush burned and was not consumed." We shall make a short, a very short visit to these valleys, than which Europe has no more sacred soil. But first let us speak of some of the bulwarks which an all-wise Providence has erected in our day around a Church and people whose existence is one of the great living miracles of the world.

The revolutions which swept over Italy in 1848 were the knell of the other Italian States, but to Piedmont they were the trumpet of liberty. No man living can satisfactorily explain why the same event should have operated so disastrously for the one, and so beneficially for the other. No reason can be found in the condition of the country itself: the thing is inexplicable on ordinary principles; and the more intelligent Piedmontese at this day speak of it as a miracle. But so is the fact. Piedmont is a constitutional kingdom; and I went with M. Malan, himself a Waldensian, and a member of the Chamber of Deputies, to see the hall where their Parliament sits. A spacious flight of steps conducts to a noble hall, in form an ellipse, and surmounted by a dome. At one end of the ellipse hangs a portrait of the President, and underneath is his richly gilt chair, with a crimson-covered table before it. Right in front of the Speaker's chair, on a lower level, is placed the tribune, which much resembles the precentor's desk in a Scottish church. The tribune is occupied only when a Minister makes a Ministerial declaration, or a Convener of a Committee gives in his Report. An open space divides the tribune from the seats of the members. These last run all round the hall, in concentric rows of benches, also covered with crimson. "There, on the right," said M. Malan, "sit the priest party. In the front are the Ministerial members; on the left is my seat. There is an extreme left to which I do not belong: I have not passed the constitutional line. This lower tier of galleries is for the conductors of the press and the diplomatic corps; this higher gallery is for ladies and military men. We are 204 members in all. We have a member for every twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Our population is four millions and a half. Our House of Peers contains only ninety members. The King has the privilege of nominating to it, but peers so created are only for life."

It was, in truth, a marvellous sight;—a free and independent Parliament meeting in the ancient capital of the bigoted Piedmont, with a free press and a public looking on, and one of the long proscribed Vaudois race occupying a seat in it. The more I thought of it, the more I wondered. The causes which had led to so extraordinary a result seemed clearly providential. When King Charles Albert in 1848 gave his subjects a Constitution, no one had asked it, and few there were who could value it, or even knew what a Constitution meant. One or two public writers there were who said that public opinion demanded it; but, in sooth, there was then no public opinion in the country. Soon after this the campaign in Lombardy was commenced, and the result of that campaign threatened the Piedmontese Constitution with extinction. The Piedmontese army was beaten by the Austrians, and had to make a hasty and inglorious retreat into their own country. Every one then expected that Radetzky would march upon Turin, put down the Constitution, and seize upon Sardinia. Contrary to his usual habits, the old warrior halted on the frontier, as if kept back by an invisible power, and the Constitution was saved. Then came the death of Charles Albert, of a broken heart, in Oporto, whither he had fled; and every one believed that the Piedmontese charter would accompany its author to the tomb. The dispositions and policy of the new king were unknown; but the probability was that he would follow the example of his brother sovereigns of Italy, all of whom had begun to revoke the Constitutions which they had so recently inaugurated with solemn oaths. Happily these fears were not realized. The new perils passed over, and left the Constitution unscathed. King Victor Immanuel,—a constitutional monarch simply by accident,—turned out a good-natured, easy-minded man, who loved the chase and his country seat, and found it more agreeable to live on good terms with his subjects, and enjoy a handsome civil list,—which his Parliament has taken care to vote him,—than to be indebted for his safety and a bankrupt exchequer to the bayonets of his guards. Thus marvellously, hitherto, in the midst of dangers at home and re-action abroad, has the Piedmontese charter been preserved. I dwell with the greater minuteness on this point, because on the integrity of that charter are suspended the civil liberties of the Church of the Vaudois. When I was in Turin the Constitution was three years old; but even then its existence was exceedingly precarious. The King could have revoked it at any moment; and there was not then, I was assured by General Beckwith,—who knows the state of the Piedmontese nation well,—moral power in the country to offer any effectual resistance, had the royal will decreed the suppression of constitutional government. "But," added he, "should the Constitution live three years longer, the people by that time will have become so habituated to the working of a free Constitution, and public opinion will have acquired such strength, that it will be impossible for the monarch to retrace his steps, even should he be so inclined." It is exactly three years since that time, and the state of the Piedmontese nation at this moment is such as to justify the words of the sagacious old man.

The first grand difficulty in the way of the Constitution was, the numbers and power of the priesthood. In no country in Europe,—not even in France and Austria, when their size is compared,—were the benefices so numerous, or their holders so luxuriously fed. Piedmont was the paradise of priests. The ecclesiastical statistics of that kingdom, furnished to the French journal *La Presse*, on occasion of the introduction of the bill for suppressing the convents, on the 8th of January 1855, reveals a state of things truly astonishing. Notwithstanding that the population is only four and a half millions, there are in Sardinia 7 archbishops; 34 bishops; 41 chapters, with 860 canons attached to the bishoprics; 73 simple chapters, with 470 canons; 1100 livings for the canons; and, lastly, 4267 parishes, with some thousands of parish priests. The domain of the Church represents a capital of 400 millions of francs, with a yearly revenue of 17 millions and upwards. This enormous wealth is divided amongst the clergy in proportions grossly unequal. The 41 prelates of Sardinia enjoy a revenue of nearly a million and a half of francs, which is double what used to maintain all the bishops of the French empire. The Archbishop of Turin has an income of 120,000 francs, which is more than the whole bench of Belgian bishops.

The other prelates are paid in proportion. As a set-off to this wealth, there are in Sardinia upwards of 2000 curates, not one of whom has so much as 800 francs, or about L.35 sterling. These are thus tempted to prey upon the people. Such is the terrible organization which the King and Parliament have to encounter in carrying out their reforms, and such is the fearful incubus which has pressed for ages upon the social rights and industrial energies of the Piedmontese people.

But this is but a part of the great sacerdotal army encamped in Piedmont. There are 71 religious orders besides, divided into 604 houses, containing in all 8563 monks and nuns. The expense of feeding these six hundred houses, with their army of eight thousand strong, forms an item of two millions and a-half of francs, and represents a capital of forty-five millions. The greatest admirer of these fraternities will scarce deny that this is a handsome remuneration for their services; indeed, we never could make out what these services really are. They do not teach the youth, or pray with the aged. For reading they have no taste; and to write what will be read, or preach what will be listened to, is far beyond their ability. Their pious hands disdain all contact with the plough, and the loom, and the spade. They share with their countrymen neither the labours of peace, nor the dangers of war. They lounge all day in the streets, or about the wine shops; and, when the dinner-hour arrives, they troop home-wards, to retail the gossip of the town over a groaning board and a well-filled flagon. Thus they fatten like pigs, being about as cleanly, but scarce as useful. It is not surprising that a bill should at last have reached the Chambers, proposing, *first*, the better distribution of the revenues of the Church, equal to a fourth of the kingdom; and, *second*, the suppression of those "houses," the rules of which bind over their members to sheer, downright idleness, leaving only those who have some show of public duty to perform. The priests denounce the bill as "spoliation and robbery" of course, and prophesy all manner of things against so wicked a kingdom. Doubtless it is daring impiety in the eyes of Rome to forbid a man with a shaven crown and a brown cloak to play the idler and vagabond. We are only surprised that the people of Piedmont have so long suffered their labours to be eaten up by an order of men useless, and worse than useless.

[Pg 33]

Another grand difficulty in Piedmont was the absence of a middle class,—wealthy, intelligent, and independent. No one felt that he had rights, and you never heard people saying there, as you may do in Britain, "this is my right, and I will have it." A feeling of individual right, and of responsibility,—for the two go together,—was then just beginning to dawn upon the popular mind. This was accompanied by a certain amount of disorganizing influence; not that of Socialism,—which, happily, scarce existed in Piedmont,—but that of self-action. Every one was feeling his own way. The priests, of course, were exceedingly wroth, and loudly accused Protestantism as the cause of all this commotion in men's minds. Alas! there was no Protestantism in Piedmont, for it had been one of the most bigoted kingdoms in Italy. It was their own handiwork; for a tyranny always produces a democracy. As if by a miracle, a powerful and popular press started up in Turin. The writers in the *Opinione* and the *Gazetta del Popolo*, acting, I suspect, on a hint given by some Vaudois that there was an old book, now little known, that would help them in the war they were now waging, went to the Bible, and, finding that it made against the priests, were liberal in their quotations from it. Their most telling hits were the extracts from Scripture; and finding it so, they quoted yet more largely. The priests were much concerned to see Holy Scripture so far profaned as to be quoted in newspapers, and exposed freely to the gaze of the vulgar. But what could they do? Their own literary qualifications did not warrant them to enter the lists with these writers: they had forgot the way to preach, unless at Lent; they could work the confessional, but even it began to be silenced by the powerful artillery of the press. At an earlier stage they might have roused the peasantry, and marched upon the Constitution, whose life they knew was the death of their power; but it was too late in 1851. An attempt of this sort made a year or two after, among the peasantry of the Val d'Aosta, turned out a miserable failure. Thus, a movement which in other countries came forward under the sanction of the priesthood, from the very outset in Piedmont took a contrary direction, and set in full against the Church. Since that day liberty has been working itself, bit by bit, into the action of the Constitution, and the feelings of the people; and now, I believe, neither King nor Parliament, were they so inclined, could put it down.

[Pg 34]

[Pg 35]

The sum of the matter then is, that of all the kingdoms which the era of 1848 started in the path of free government, the brave little State of Piedmont alone has persevered to this day. Amid the wide weltering sea of Italian anarchy and despotism, here, and here alone, liberty finds a spot on which to plant her foot. Again we ask, why is this? There is nothing in the past history of the country,—nothing in the present state of the nation,—which can account for it. We must look elsewhere for a solution; and we do not hesitate to avow our firm conviction, that a special Providence has shielded the Constitution of Piedmont, because with that Constitution is bound up the liberties of the ancient martyr Church of the Vaudois. It was the only one of the Italian Constitutions that carried in it so sacred a guarantee of permanency. On the 17th of February 1848 (the day is worth remembering), Charles Albert, by a royal edict, admitted the Waldenses to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights, in common with the rest of their fellow-subjects. Now, for the first time in a thousand years, the trumpet of liberty sounded amid the Vaudois valleys; and the shout of joy which the Alps sent back seemed like the first response to the prayer which had so often ascended from these hills, "How long, O Lord." Would not Sodom have been spared had ten righteous men been found in it? and why not Piedmont, seeing the Waldensian

Church was there? Yes, Piedmont is the little Zoar of the Italian plains! Little may its people reckon to whom it is they owe their escape. It is nevertheless a truth that, but for the poor Vaudois, whom, instigated by the Pope, they long and ruthlessly laboured to exterminate, their country would have been at this day in the same gulph of social demoralization and political re-action with Tuscany, and Naples, and Rome. These last were taken, and Piedmont escaped.

[Pg 36]

And the country is truly flourishing. It has thriven every day since Charles Albert emancipated the Vaudois. No one can cross its frontier without being struck with the contrast it presents to the other Italian States. While they are decaying like a corpse, it is flourishing like the chestnut-tree of its own mountains. The very faces of the people may tell you that the country is free and prosperous. Its citizens walk about with the cheerful, active air of men who have something to do and to enjoy, and not with the listless, desponding, heart-sick look which marks the inhabitants of the other States of Italy. Here, too, you miss that universal beggary and vagabondism that disfigure and pollute all the other countries of the Peninsula. What rich loam the ploughman turns up! What magnificent vines shade its plains! Public works are in progress, railways have been formed, and new houses are building. Not fewer than a hundred houses were built in Turin last year, which is more, I verily believe, than in all the other Italian towns out of Piedmont taken together. Thus, while the other States of Italy are foundering in the tempest, Piedmont lives because it carries the Vaudois and their fortunes.

From the hall of the Chamber of Deputies I went with M. Malan to the office of the *Gazetta del Popolo*, to be introduced to its editors. The *Gazetta del Popolo* is a daily paper, with a circulation of 15,000; and, being sold at a penny, is universally read by the middle and lower classes. It is the *Times* of Piedmont. Its editors are men of great talent, and write with the practical good sense and racy style of Cobbett. They are not religious men, neither are they Romanists, though nominally connected with the Church of the State; but they are warm advocates of constitutional government, hearty haters of the Papacy, and have done much to enlighten the public mind, and loosen it from Romanism. They first of all made inquiries respecting the external resemblance of Puseyistic and Popish worship, as I had seen the latter in Italy. They made yet more eager inquiries respecting the progress and prospects of Puseyism in England, and about a then recent declaration of the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the effect that there were only two Bishops in the Church of England that had gone over to Puseyism. They seemed to feel that the fortunes of the Papacy would turn mainly upon the fortunes of Puseyism in England. As regarded the Archbishop, I replied, that I believed in the substantial accuracy of his statement, that there were not more than two members of the episcopate who could be held to be decided Puseyites; and as regarded the progress of Puseyism, I said, that it had been making great and rapid progress, but that the papal aggression, in my humble opinion, had dealt a somewhat heavy blow to both Popery and Puseyism,—that so long as Romanism came begging for toleration, it had found great favour in the eyes of the liberals; but when it came claiming to govern, it had scared away many of its former supporters, who had come to know it better,—and that the Protestant feeling which the aggression had evoked on the part of the Court, the Parliament, and the people, had tended to discourage Romanism, and all kindred or identical creeds. They were delighted to hear this, and said that they would baptize the fact in the *Gazetta del Popolo*, "the assassination of the Papacy by Cardinal Wiseman." Their paper, M. Malan afterwards told me, is published on Sabbaths as well (there are worse things done on that day in Italy, even by bishops), on which day they print their weekly sermon. "You won't preach," say they to the priests; "therefore we will;" and it is in their Sabbath sheet that they make their bitterest assaults upon the priesthood. They quote largely from Scripture: not that they wish to establish evangelical truth, of which they know little, but because they find such quotations to be the most powerful weapons which they can employ against the Papacy. In truth, they advertised in this way the Bible to their countrymen, many of whom had never heard of such a book till then.

[Pg 37]

[Pg 38]

I was inexpressibly delighted to find such men in Turin wielding such influence, and took the liberty of saying at parting, that we in England had beheld with admiration the noble stand Piedmont had made in behalf of constitutional government,—that we were watching with intense interest the future career of their nation,—that we were cherishing the hope that they would manfully maintain the ground they had taken up,—and that in England, and especially in Scotland, we felt that the root of all the despotism of the Continent was the Papacy,—that the way to strike for liberty was to strike at Rome,—and that till the Papacy was overthrown, never would the nations of the world be either free or happy. They assured me that in these sentiments they heartily concurred, and that they were the very ideas they were endeavouring to propagate. They gave me, on taking leave, a copy of that morning's paper as a *souvenir*; and on examining it afterwards, I found that the topic of its leading article was quite in the vein of our conversation. The great bulk of the liberal party in Piedmont shared even then the ideas of the editors of the *Gazetta del Popolo*, and felt that to lay the foundations of constitutional liberty, they needs must raze those of Rome. This is a truth; and not only so,—it is the primal truth in the science of European liberty. This truth only now begins to be understood on the Continent. It is the main lesson which the re-action of 1849 has been overruled to teach. All former insurrections have been against kings and aristocrats: even in 1848 the Italians were willing to accept the leadership of the Pope. The perfidies and atrocities of which they have since been the victims have burned the essential tyranny of the papal system into their minds; and the next insurrection that takes place will be against the Papacy.

[Pg 39]

A constitution, a free press, and a public opinion, are but the outward defences of a divine and immortal principle, which, rooted in the soil of Piedmont, has outlived a long winter, and is now beginning to bud afresh, and to send forth goodlier shoots than ever. To this I next turned. Conducted by M. Malan, I went to the western quarter of Turin, where, amid the gardens and elegant mansions of the suburbs, workmen were digging the foundations of what was to be a spacious building. On this spot the Dominicans in former ages had burned the bodies of the martyrs; and now the Waldensian temple stands here,—a striking proof, surely, of the immortality of truth,—to rise, and live, and speak boldly, on the very spot where she had been bound to a stake, burned, and extinguished, as the persecutor believed. This church, not the least elegant in a city abounding with elegant structures, has since been opened, and is filled every Sabbath with well-nigh a thousand auditors,—the largest congregation, I will venture to say, in Turin.

In 1851 I could visit the cradle of this movement. It had its first rise in the labours of Felix Neff, twenty-five years before; but it was not till the revolution of 1848 that it appeared above ground. Even in 1851, colportage among the Piedmontese was prohibited, though it was allowable to print or import the Bible for the use of the Waldenses, and the Government winked at its sale to their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. I was shown in M. Malan's banking office the Bible depot, and was gratified to find that the sales which were made to applicants only had during the past year amounted to a thousand copies. Evening meetings were held every day of the week, in various parts of Turin, at which the Bible was read, and points of controversy betwixt Christianity and Romanism eagerly discussed. The Rev. M. Meille, the able editor of the *Buona Novella*,—a paper then just starting,—informed me that not fewer than ninety persons had been present at the meeting superintended by him the night before. These week-day assemblages, as well as the Sabbath audiences, were of a very miscellaneous character,—Vaudois, who had come to Turin to be servants, for, prior to the revolution, they could be nothing else; Piedmontese tradesmen; Swiss, Germans, and Italian refugees, to whom three pastors ministered,—one in French, one in German, and a third in the Italian tongue. There were then not fewer than ten re-unions every week in Turin. The idea, too, had been started of taking advantage of the workmen's clubs for the propagation of the gospel. A network of such societies covered northern and central Italy. The clubs in Turin corresponded with those in Genoa, Alessandria, and all the principal towns of Piedmont; and these again with similar clubs in central Italy; and any new theory or doctrine introduced into one soon made the round of all. The plan adopted was to send evangelical workmen into these clubs, who were listened to as they propounded the new plan of justification by faith. The clubs in Turin were first leavened with the gospel; thence it was extended to Genoa, and gradually also to central Italy. While the *prolétaires* in France were discussing the claims of labour, the workmen in Piedmont were canvassing the doctrines of the New Testament; and hence the difference betwixt the two countries.

It was now drawing towards sunset, and I purposed enjoying the twilight,—delicious in all climates, but especially in Italy,—on the terrace of the College or Monastery of the Capuchins. This monastery stands on the Collina, a romantic height on the south of Turin, washed by the Po, with villas and temples on its crest and summits. I took my way through the noble street that leads southwards, halting at the book-stalls, and picking out of their heaps of rubbish an Italian copy of the Catechism of Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux. The Collina was all in a blaze; the windows of the Palazzo Regina glittered in the setting beams; and the dome of the Superga shone like gold. Crossing the Po, I ascended by the winding avenue of shady acacias, which are planted there to protect the cowed heads of the fathers from the noonday sun. One of the monks was winding his way up hill, at a pace which gave me full opportunity of observing him. A little black cap covered his scalp; his round bullet-head, which bristled with short, thick-set hairs, joined on, by a neck of considerably more than the average girth, to shoulders of Atlantean dimensions. His body was enveloped in a coarse brown mantle, which descended to his calves, and was gathered round his middle with a slender white cord. His naked feet were thrust into sandals. The features of the "religious" were coarse and swollen; and he strode up hill before me with a gait which would have made a peaceful man, had he met him on a roadside in Scotland, give him a wide offing. Parties of soldiers wounded in the late campaign were sauntering in the square of the monastery, or looking over the low wall at the city beneath. Their pale and sickly looks formed a striking contrast to the athletic forms of the full-fed monks. It was inexplicable to me, that the youth of Sardinia, immature and raw, should be drafted into the army, while such an amount of thews and sinews as this monastery, and hundreds more, contained, should be allowed to run to waste, or worse. If but for their health, the monks should be compelled to fight the next campaign.

The sun went down. Long horizontal shafts of golden light shot through amidst the Alps; their snows glittered with a dazzling whiteness: whiteness is a weak term;—it was a brilliant and lustrous glory, like that of light itself. Anon a crimson blush ran along the chain. It faded; it came again. A wall of burning peaks, from two to three hundred miles in length, rose along the horizon. Eve, with her purple shadows, drew on; and I left the mountains under a sky of vermilion, with Monte Viso covering with its shadow the honoured dust that sleeps around it, and pointing with its stony finger to that sky whither the spirits of the martyred Vaudois have now ascended. It seemed to say, "Come and see."

STRUCTURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS.

Journey to "Valleys"—Dinner at Pignerolo—Grandeur of Scenery—Associations—Bicherasio—Procession of *Santissimo*—Connection betwixt the History and the Country of the Vaudois—The Three Valleys of Martino, Angrona, and Lucerna—Their Arrangement—Strength—Fertility—La Tour—The Castelluzzo—Scenery of the Val Lucerna—The Manna of the Waldenses—Populousness of the Valleys—Variety of Productions—The Roman Flood and the Vaudois Ark.

THE Valleys of the Vaudois lie about thirty miles to the south-west of Turin. The road thither it is scarce possible to miss. Keeping the lofty and pyramidal summit of Monte Viso in your eye, you go straight on, in a line parallel with the Alps, along the valley of the Po, which is but a prolongation of the great plain of Lombardy. On my way down to these valleys, I observed on the roadside numerous little temples, which the natives, in true Pagan fashion, had erected to their deities. The niches of these temples were filled with Madonnas, crucifixes, and saints, gaunt and grizzly, with unlighted candles stuck before them, or rude paintings and tinsel baubles hung up as votive offerings. The signboards—especially those of the wine venders—were exceedingly religious. They displayed, for the most part, a bizarre painting of the Virgin, and occasionally of the Pope; and not unfrequently underneath these personages were a company of heretics, such as those I was going to visit, sweltering in flames. Were a Protestant vintner to sell his ale beneath a picture of Catholics burning in hell, I fear we should never hear the last of it. But I must say, that these pictures seemed the production of past times. They were one and all sorely faded, as if their owners were beginning to be somewhat ashamed of them, or lacked zeal to repair them. The *conducteur* of the stage had an Italian translation of Mr Gladstone's well-known pamphlet on Naples in his hand, which then covered all the book-stalls in Turin, and was read by every one. This led to a lively discussion on the subject of the Church, between him and two fellow-travellers, to whom I had been introduced at starting, as Waldenses. I observed that, although he appeared to come off but second best in the controversy, he bore all with unruffled humour, as if not unwilling to be beaten. At length, after a ride of twenty miles over the plain, in which the husbandman, with plough as old in its form as the Georgics, was turning up a soil rich, black, and glossy as the raven's wing, we arrived at Pignerolo, a town on the borders of the Vaudois land.

[Pg 44]

The two Vaudois and myself adjourned to the hotel to dine. Even in this we had an instance of changed times. In this very town of Pignerolo a law had been in existence, and was not long repealed, forbidding, under severe penalties, any one to give meat or drink to a Vaudois. The "Valleys" were only ten miles distant, and we agreed to walk thither on foot. Indeed, all such spots must be so visited, if one would feel their full influence. Leaving Pignerolo, the road began to draw into the bosom of the mountains, and the scenery became grander at every step. On the right rose the hills of the Vaudois, with knolls glittering with woods and cottages scattered at their feet. On the left, long reaches of the Po, meandering through pasturages and vineyards, gleamed out golden in the western sun. The scenery reminded me much of the Highlands at Comrie, only it was on a scale of richness and magnificence unknown to Scotland.

[Pg 45]

After advancing a few miles, I chanced to turn and look back. The change the mountains had undergone struck me much. A division of Alps, tall and cloud-capped, appeared to have broken off from the main army, and to have come marching into the plain; and while the mountains were closing in upon us behind, they appeared to be falling back in front, and arranging themselves into the segment of a vast circle. A magnificent amphitheatre had risen noiselessly around us. On all sides save the south, where a reach of the valley was still visible, the eye met only a lofty wall of mountains, hung in a rich and gorgeous tapestry of bright green pasturages and shady pine-forests, with the frequent sunlight gleam of white chalets. The snows of their summits were veiled in masses of cloud, which the southerly winds were bringing up upon them from the Mediterranean. I seemed to have entered some stately temple,—a temple not of mortal workmanship,—which needed no tall shaft, no groined roof, no silver lamps, no chisel or pencil of artist to beautify it, and no white-robed priest to make it holy. It had been built by Him whose power laid the foundations of the earth, and hung the stars in heaven; and it had been consecrated by sacrifices such as Rome's mitred priests never offered in aisled cathedral. Nor had it been the scene only of lofty endurance: it had been the scene also of sweet and holy joys. There the Vaudois patriarchs, like Enoch, had "walked with God;" there they had read his Word, and kept his Sabbaths. They had sung his praise by these silvery brooks, and kneeled in prayer beneath these chestnut trees. There, too, arose the shout of triumphant battle; and from those valleys the Vaudois martyrs had gone up, higher than these white peaks, to take their place in the white-robed and palm-bearing company. Can the spirit, I asked myself, ever forget its earthly struggles, or the scene on which they were endured? and may not the very same picture of beauty and grandeur now before my eye be imprinted eternally on the memory of many of the blessed in Heaven?

[Pg 46]

There was silence on plain and mountain,—a hush like that of a sanctuary, reverent and deep, and broken only by the flow of the torrent and the sound of voices among the vineyards. I could not fail to observe that sounds here were more musical than on the plain. This is a peculiarity

belonging to mountainous regions; but I have nowhere seen it so perceptible as here. Every accent had a fullness and melody of tone, as if spoken in a whispering gallery. Right in the centre of the circle formed by the mountains was the entrance of the Vaudois valleys. The place was due north from where we now were, but we had to make a considerable detour in order to reach it. A long low hill, rough with boulders and feathery with woods, lay across the mouth of these valleys; and we had to go round it on the west, and return along the fertile vale which divides it from the high Alps, whose straths and gorges form the dwellings of the Waldenses.

A dream it seemed to be, walking thus within the shadow of the Vaudois hills. And then, too, what a strange chance was it which had thrown me into the society of my two Waldensian fellow-travellers! They had met me on the threshold of their country, as if sent to bid me welcome, and conduct my steps into a land which the prayers and sufferings of their forefathers had for ever hallowed. They could not speak a word of my tongue; and to them my transalpine Italian was not more than intelligible. Yet, such is the power of a common sympathy, the conversation did not once flag all the way; and it had reference, of course, to one subject. I told them that I was not unacquainted with their glorious history;—that from a child I had known the noble deeds of their fathers, who had received an equal place in my veneration with the men of old, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy;"—and that, next to the hills of my own land, hallowed, too, with martyr-blood, I loved the mountains within whose shadow my wandering steps had now brought me. The eyes of my Vaudois friends kindled; they were not unconscious, I could see, of their noble lineage; and they were visibly touched by the circumstance that a stranger from a distant land—drawn thither by sympathy with the great struggles of their nation—should come to visit their mountains. Every object in any way connected with their history, and especially with their persecutions, was carefully pointed out to me. "There," said they, "is our frontier church, the first of the Vaudois candles," pointing to a white edifice that gleamed out upon us amid woods and rocks, on the summit of a hill, soon after leaving Pignerolo. They mentioned, too, with peculiar emphasis, the year of the last great massacre of their brethren. The memory of that transaction, I feel assured, will perish only with the Vaudois race. Nor can I forget the evident pride with which, on nearing the valley of Lucerne, they pointed to the giant form of their Castelluzzo, now looming through the shades of night, and told me that in the caves of that mighty rock their fathers found shelter, when the valley beneath was covered with armed men.

Nowhere had I seen more luxuriant vines. They were festooned, too, after the manner of those I had seen among the Alps; but here the effect was more beautiful. They were literally stretched out over entire fields in an unbroken web of boughs. Clothed with luxuriant foliage, they looked like another azure canopy extended over the soil. There was ample room beneath for the ploughman and his bullocks. The golden beams, struggling through the massy foliage, fell in a mellow and finely tinted shower on the newly ploughed soil. Wheat is said to ripen better beneath the vine-shade than in the open sun. The season of grapes was shortly past; but here and there large clusters were still pendent on the bough.

Hitherto, although we had been skirting the Vaudois territory, we had not set foot upon it. The line which separates it from the rest of Piedmont touches the small town of Bicherasio, on the western flank of the low hill I have mentioned; and the roofs of the little town were already in sight. Passing, on the left, a white-walled mass-house on a small height, with the priest looking at us from amid the autumn-tinted vine leaves that shaded the wall, we entered the town of Bicherasio. The first sight we saw was a procession advancing up the street at double-quick time. I was at first sorely puzzled what to make of it. There was an air of mingled fun and gravity on the faces of the crowd; but the former so greatly predominated, that I took the affair for a frolic of the youths of Bicherasio. First came a squad of dirty boys, some of whom carried prayer-books: these were followed by some dozen or so of young women in their working attire, ranged in line, and carrying flambeaux. In the centre of the procession was a tall raw-boned priest, of about twenty-five years of age, with a little box in his hand. His head was bare, and he wore a long brown dress, bound with a cord round his middle. A canopy of crimson cloth, sorely soiled and tarnished, was borne over him by four of the taller lads. He had a flurried and wild look, as if he had slept out in the woods all night, and had had time only to shake himself, and put his fingers through his hair, before being called on to run with his little box. The procession closed, as it had opened, with a cloud of noisy and dirty urchins hanging on the rear of the priest and his flambeaux-bearing company. The whole swept past us at such a rapid pace, that I could only, by way of divining its object, open large wondering eyes upon it, which the large-boned lad in the brown cloak noticed, and repaid with a scowl, which broke no bones, however. "He is carrying the *santissimo*," said my fellow-travellers, when the procession had passed, "to a dying man." We passed the line, and set foot on the Vaudois territory. Being now on privileged soil, and safe from any ebullition which the scant reverence we had paid the procession of the *santissimo* might have drawn upon us, we entered a small albergo, and partook together of a bottle of wine. Our long walk, and the warmth of the evening, made the refreshment exceedingly agreeable. By way of commending the qualities of their soil, my companions remarked, that "this was the vine of the land." I felt disposed to deal with it as David did with the water of the well of Bethlehem, for here

[Pg 47]

[Pg 48]

[Pg 49]

"The nurture of the peasant's vines
Hath been the martyr's blood!"

It was dark before I reached La Tour; but one of my fellow-travellers—the other having left us at San Giovanni—accompanied me every footstep of the way, having passed his own dwelling two full miles, to do me this kindness.

[Pg 50]

I must remind the reader, that this is simply a look in upon the Vaudois, on my way to Rome. I purpose here no description in full of the territory of the Vaudois, or of the people of the Vaudois. Their hills were shrouded in cloud and rain all the while I lived amongst them; and although my intention was to visit on foot every inch of their country, and more especially the scenes of their great struggles, I was compelled, after waiting well nigh a week, to take my departure without having accomplished this part of my object. Leaving, then, the seeing and describing these famous valleys to some possibly future day, all I shall attempt here is to convey some idea of the structural arrangement—the osteology, if I may call it so—of the Waldensian territory, and the general condition of the Waldensian people. First, of their country.

A country and its people can never well be separated. The former, with silent but ceaseless influence, moulds the genius and habits of the latter, and determines the character of their history. It marks them out as fated for slavery or freedom,—degradation or glory. The country of the Vaudois is the material basis of their history; and the sublime points of their scenery join in, as it were, with the sublime passages of their nation. Without such a country, we cannot conceive how the Vaudois could have escaped extermination. The fertility and grandeur of their valleys were no chance gifts, but special endowments, having reference to the mighty moral struggle of which they were the destined theatre. It is this sentiment that forms the living spirit in the beautiful lines of Mrs Hemans, entitled, "The Hymn of the Vaudois Mountaineers:"—

For the strength of the hills we bless thee.
Our God, our fathers' God.
Thou hast made thy children mighty,
By the touch of the mountain sod.
Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge
Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

[Pg 51]

We are watchers of a beacon
Whose light must never die;
We are guardians of an altar
'Midst the silence of the sky.
The rocks yield founts of courage,
Struck forth as by thy rod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

For the dark resounding caverns,
Where thy still small voice is heard;
For the strong pines of the forests
That by thy breath are stirred;
For the storms on whose free pinions
Thy spirit walks abroad;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

The banner of the chieftain
Far, far below us waves;
The war horse of the spearman
Cannot reach our lofty caves.
Thy dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom's last abode;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

For the shadow of thy presence
Round our camp of rock outspread;
For the stern defiles of battle,
Bearing record of our dead;
For the snows and for the torrents,
For the free heart's burial sod;
For the strength of the hills we bless thee,
Our God, our fathers' God!

[Pg 52]

We read in the Apocalypse, that "the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." "A place prepared" undoubtedly implies a special arrangement and a special adaptation, in the future dwelling of the Church, to the mission to be assigned her. The "wilderness" of the Apocalypse, we are inclined to think, is the great chain of the Alps; and the "place prepared" in that wilderness, we are also inclined to think, are the Cottian Alps, and more especially those valleys in the Cottian Alps which the confessors, known as the Vaudois, inhabited. Long after Rome had subjugated the plains, she possessed scarce a foot-breadth among the mountains. These, throughout well-nigh their entire extent, from where the Simplon road now cuts the chain, to the sea, were peopled by the professors of the gospel. They were a Goshen of light in the midst of an Egypt of darkness; and in these peaceful and sublime solitudes holy men fed their flocks amid the green pastures and beside the clear waters of evangelical truth. But persecution came: it waxed hot; and every succeeding century beheld these confessors fewer in number, and their territory more restricted. At last all that remained to the Vaudois were only three valleys at the foot of Monte Viso; and if we examine their structure, we will find them arranged with special reference to the war the Church was here called to wage.

The three valleys are the Val Martino, the Val Angrona, and the Val Lucerna. Nothing could be simpler than their arrangement; at the same time, nothing could be stronger. The three valleys spread out like a fan,—radiating, as it were, from the same point, and stretching away in a winding vista of vineyards, meadows, chestnut groves, dark gorges, and foaming torrents, to the very summits and glaciers of the Alps. Nearly at the point of junction of the Val Angrona and the Val Lucerna stands La Tour, the capital of the valleys. It consists of a single street (for the few off-shoots are not worth mentioning) of two-storey houses, whitewashed, and topped with broad eaves, which project till they leave only a narrow strip of sky visible overhead. The town winds up the hill for a quarter of a mile or so, under the shadow of the famous Castelluzzo,—a stupendous mountain of rock, which shoots up, erect as a column on its pedestal, to a height of many thousands of feet, and, in other days, sheltered, as I have said, in its stony arms, the persecuted children of the valleys, when the armies of France and Savoy gathered round its base. How often I watched it, during my stay there, as its mighty form now became lost, and now flashed forth from the mountain mists! Over what sad scenes has that rock looked! It has seen the peaceful La Tour a heap of smoking ruins, and the clear waters of the Pelice, which meander at its feet, red with the blood of the children of the valleys. It has heard the wrathful execrations of armed men ascending where the prayers and praises of the Vaudois were wont to come, borne on the evening breeze,—scenes unspeakably affecting, but which, nevertheless, from the principle which they embodied, and the Christian heroism which they evoked, add dignity to humanity itself. When we would rebut those universal libels which infidels have written upon our race, we point to the Vaudois. However corrupt whole nations and continents may have been, that nature which could produce the Vaudois must have originally possessed, and be still capable of having imparted to it, God-like qualities.

The strength of the Vaudois position, as I take it, lies in this, that the three valleys have their entrance within a comparatively narrow space. The country of the Vaudois was, in fact, an immense citadel, with its foundation on the rock, and its top above the clouds, and with but one gate of entrance. That gate could be easily defended; nay, it *was* defended. He who built this mighty fortress had thrown up a rampart before its gate, as if with a special eye to the protection of its inmates. The long hill of which I have already spoken, which rises to a height of from four to five hundred feet, lies across the opening of these valleys, at about a mile's breadth, and serves as a wall of defence. But even granting that this entrance should be forced, as it sometimes was, there were ample means within the mountains themselves, which were but a congeries of fortresses, for prolonging the contest. The valleys abound with gorges and narrow passages, where one man might maintain the way against fifty. There were, too, escarpments of rock, with galleries and caves known only to the Vaudois. Even the mists of their hills befriended them; veiling them, on some memorable instances, from the keen pursuit of their foes. Thus, every foot-breadth of their territory was capable of being contested, and *was* contested against the flower of the French and Sardinian armies, led against them in overwhelming numbers, with a courage which Rome never excelled, and a patriotism which Greece never equalled.

I found, too, that it was "a good land" which the Lord their God had given to the Vaudois,—"a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil, olive and honey." The same architect who built the fortress had provisioned it, so to speak, and that in no stinted measure. He who placed magazines of bread in the clouds, and rained it upon the Israelites when they journeyed through the desert, had laid up store of corn, and oil, and wine, in the soil of these valleys; so that the Vaudois, when their enemies pressed them on the plain, and cut off their supplies from without, might still enjoy within their own mountain rampart abundance of all things.

On the first morning after my arrival, I walked out along the Val Lucerna southward. Flowers and fruit in rich profusion covered every spot of ground under the eye, from the banks of the stream to the skirts of the mist that veiled the mountains. The fields, which were covered with the various cultivation of wheat, maize, orchards, and vineyards, were fenced with neatly dressed

hedge-rows. The vine-stocks were magnificently large, and their leaves had already acquired the fine golden yellow which autumn imparts. At a little distance, on a low hill, deeply embosomed in foliage, was the church of San Giovanni, looking as brilliantly white as if it had been a piece of marble fresh from the chisel. Hard by, peeping out amidst fruit-bearing trees, was the village of Lucerna. On the right rose the mighty wall of the Alps; on the left the valley opened out into the plain of the Po, bounded by a range of blue-tinted hills, which stretched away to the south-west, mingling in the distant horizon with the mightier masses of the Alps. The sun now broke through the haze; and his rays, falling on the luxuriant beauty of the valley, and on the more varied but not less rich covering of the hill-side,—the pasturages, the winding belts of planting, the white chalets,—lighted up a picture which a painter might have exhibited as a relic of an unfallen world, or a reminiscence of that garden from which transgression drove man forth.

After breakfast, I sallied out to explore the valley of Lucerne, at the entrance of which is placed, as I have said, La Tour, the capital of the Waldenses. My intention was to trace its windings all the way, past the village and church of Bobbio, and up the mountains, till it loses itself amid the snows of their summits,—an expedition which was brought to an abrupt termination by the black clouds which came rolling up the valley at noon like the smoke of a furnace, followed by torrents of rain. Threading my way through the narrow winding street of La Tour, and skirting the base of the giant Castelluzzo, I emerged upon the open valley. I was enchanted by its mingled loveliness and grandeur. Its bottom, which might be from one to two miles in breadth, though looking narrower, from the titanic character of its mountain-boundary, was, up to a certain point, one continuous vineyard. The vine there attains a noble stature, and stretches its arms from side to side of the valley in rich and lovely festoons, veiling from the great heat of the sun the golden grain which grows underneath. On either hand the mountains rise to the sky, not bare and rocky, but glowing with the vine, or shady with the chestnut, and pouring into the lap of the Vaudois, corn, and wine, and fruit. Their sides were covered throughout with vineyards, corn-fields, glades of green pasturages, clumps of forests and fruit-trees, mansions and chalets, and silvery streamlets, which meandered amid their terraces, or leaped in flashing light down the mountain, to join the Pelice at its bottom. Not a foot-breadth was barren. This teeming luxuriance attested at once the qualities of the soil and sun, and the industry of the Vaudois.

As I proceeded up the Val Lucerna, the same scene of mingled richness and magnificence continued. The golden vine still kept its place in the bottom of the valley, and stretched out its arms in very wantonness, as if the limits of the Val Lucerna were too small for its exuberant and generous fruitfulness. The hills gained in height, without losing in fertility and beauty. They offered to the eye the same picture of vine-rows, pasturages, chestnut-groves, and chalets, from the torrent at their bottom, up to the edge of the floating mist that covered their tops. At times the sun would break in, and add to the variety of lights which diversified the landscape. For already the hand of autumn had scattered over the foliage her beautiful tints of all shades, from the bright green of the pastures, down through the golden yellow of the vine, to the deep crimson of those trees which are the first to fade.

A farther advance, and the aspect of the Val Lucerna changed slightly. The vineyards ceased on the level grounds at the bottom of the valley, and in their place came rich meadow lands, on which herds were grazing. The hills on the left were still ribbed with the vine. On the right, along which, at a high level on the hill-side, ran the road, the chestnut groves became more frequent, and large boulders began occasionally to be seen. It was here that the rolling mass of cloud, so fearfully black, that it seemed of denser materials than vapour, which had followed me up hill, overtook me, and by the deluge of rain which it let fall, effectually forbade my farther progress.

The same shower which forbade my farther exploration of the Val Lucerna, arresting me, with cruel interdict, as it seemed, on the very threshold of a region teeming with grandeur, and encompassed with the halo of imperishable deeds, threw me, by a sort of compensatory chance, upon the discovery of another most interesting peculiarity of the Waldensian territory. The heavy rain compelled me to seek shelter beneath the boughs of a wide-spread chestnut-tree; and there, for the space of an hour, I remained perfectly dry, though the big drops were falling all around. Soon a continuous beating, as if of the fall of substances from a considerable height on the ground, attracted my attention,—tap, tap, tap. The sound told me that something was falling bigger and heavier than the rain-drops; but the long grass prevented me at first seeing what it was. A slight search, however, showed me that the tree beneath which I stood was actually letting fall a shower of nuts. These nuts were large and fully ripened. The breeze became slightly stronger, and the fruit shower from the trees increased so much, that a soft muffled sound rang through the whole wood. It was literally raining food. Some millions of nuts must have fallen that day in the Val Lucerna. I saw the young peasant girls coming from the chalets and farm-houses, to glean beneath the boughs; and a short time sufficed to fill their sacks, and send them back laden with the produce of the chestnut-tree. These nuts are roasted and eaten as food; and very nutritious food they are. In all the towns of northern Italy you see persons in the streets roasting them in braziers over charcoal fires, and selling them to the people, to whom they form no very inconsiderable part of their food. I have oftener than once, on a long ride, breakfasted on them, with the help of a cluster of grapes, or a few apples. This was the manna of the Waldenses. And how often have the persecuted Vaudois, when driven from their homes, and compelled to seek

[Pg 56]

[Pg 57]

[Pg 58]

refuge in those high altitudes where the vine does not grow, subsisted for days and weeks upon the produce of the chestnut-tree! I could not but admire in this the wise arrangement of Him who had prepared these valleys as the future abode of his Church. Not only had He taught the earth to yield her corn, and the hills wine, but even the skies bread. Bread was rained around their caves and hiding-places, plenteous as the manna of old; and the Vaudois, like the Israelites, had but to gather and eat.

[Pg 59]

I came also to the conclusion, that the land which the Lord had given to the Waldenses was a "large" as well as a "good" land. It is only of late that the Vaudois have been restricted to the three valleys I have named; but even taking their country as at present defined, its superficial area is by no means so inconsiderable as it is apt to be accounted by one who hears of it as confined to but three valleys. Spread out these valleys into level plains, and you find that they form a large country. It is not only the broad bottom of the valley that is cultivated;—the sides of the hills are clothed up to the very clouds with vineyards and corn-lands, and are planted with all manner of trees, yielding fruit after their kind. Where the husbandman is compelled to stop, nature takes up the task of the cultivator; and then come the chestnut-groves, with their loads of fruit, and the short sweet grass on which cattle depasture in summer, and the wild flowers from which the bees elaborate their honey. Overtopping all are the fields of snow, the great reservoirs of the springs and rivers which fertilize the country. This arrangement admitted, moreover, of far greater variety, both of climate and of produce, than could possibly obtain on the plain. There is an eternal winter at the summit of these mountains, and an almost perpetual summer at their feet.

In accordance with this great productiveness, I found the hills of the Vaudois exceedingly populous. They are alive with men, at least as compared with the solitude which our Scottish Highlands present. I had brought thither my notions of a valley taken from the narrow winding and infertile straths of Scotland, capable of feeding only a few scores of inhabitants. Here I found that a valley might be a country, and contain almost a nation in its bosom.

[Pg 60]

But, not to dwell on other peculiarities, I would remark, that such a dwelling as this—continually presenting the grandest objects—must have exerted a marked influence upon the character of the inhabitants. It was fitted to engender intrepidity of mind, a love of freedom, and an elevation of thought. It has been remarked that the inhabitants of mountainous regions are less prone than others to the worship of images. On the plain all is monotony. Summer and winter, the same landmarks, the same sky, the same sounds, surround the man. But around the dweller in the mountains,—and especially such mountains as these,—all is variety and grandeur. Now the Alps are seen with their sunlight summits and their shadowless sides; anon they veil their mighty forms in clouds and tempests. The living machinery of the mist, too, is continually varying the landscape, now engulfing valleys, now blotting out crags and mountain peaks, and suspending before the eye a cold and cheerless curtain of vapour; anon the curtain rises, the mist rolls away, and green valley and tall mountain flash back again upon you, thrilling and delighting you anew. What variety and melody of sounds, too, exist among the hills! The music of the streams, the voices of the peasants, the herdsman's song, the lowing of the cattle, the hum of the villages. The winds, with mighty organ-swell, now sweep through their mountain gorges; and now the thunder utters his awful voice, making the Alps to tremble and their pines to bow.

Such was the land of the Vaudois; the predestined abode of God's Church during the long and gloomy period of Anti-christ's reign. It was the ark in which the one elect family of Christendom was to be preserved during the flood of error that was to come upon the earth. And I have been the more minute in the description of its general structure and arrangements, because all had reference to the high moral end it was appointed to serve in the economy of Providence.

[Pg 61]

When of old a flood of waters was to be sent on the world, Noah was commanded to build an ark of gopher wood for the saving of his house. God gave him special instructions regarding its length, its breadth, its height: he was told where to place its door and window, how to arrange its storeys and rooms, and specially to gather "of all food that is eaten," that it might be for food for him and those with him. When all had been done according to the Divine instructions, God shut in Noah, and the flood came.

So was it once more. A flood was to come upon the earth; but now God himself prepared the ark in which the chosen family were to be saved. He laid its foundations in the depths, and built up its wall of rock to the sky. A door also made He for the ark, with lower, second, and third storeys. It was beautiful as strong. Corn, wine, and oil were laid up in store within it. All being ready, God said to his persecuted ones in the early Church, "Come, thou and all thy house, into the ark." He gave them the Bible to be a light to them during the darkness, and shut them in. The flood came. Century after century the waters of Papal superstition continued to prevail upon the earth. At length all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered, and all flesh died, save the little company in the Vaudois ark.

Dawn of the Reformation—Waldensian Territory a Portion of Italy—Two-fold Mission of Italy—Origin of the Vaudois—Evidence of Romanist Historians—Evidence of their own Historians—Evidence arising from the Noble Leyçon from their Geographical Position—Grandeur of the Vaudois Annals—Their Martyr Age—Their Missionary Efforts—Present Condition—Population—Churches—Schools—Stipends—Students—Social and Moral Superiority—Political and Social Disabilities—The Year 1848 their Exodus—Their Mission—A Sabbath in the Vaudois Sanctuary—Anecdote—Lesson Taught by their History.

How often during the long night must the Vaudois have looked from their mountain asylum upon a world engulfed in error, with the mingled wonder and dismay with which we may imagine the antediluvian fathers gazing from the window of their ark upon the bosom of the shoreless flood! What an appalling and mysterious dispensation! The fountains of the great deep had a second time been broken up, and each successive century saw the waters rising. Would Christianity ever re-appear? Or had the Church completed her triumphs, and finished her course? And was time to close upon a world shrouded in darkness, with nought but this feeble beacon burning amid the Alps? Such were the questions which must often have pressed upon the minds of the Vaudois.

[Pg 63]

Like Noah, too, they sent forth, from time to time, messengers from their ark, to go hither and thither, and see if yet there remained anywhere, in any part of the earth, any worshippers of the true God. They returned to their mountain hold, with the sorrowful tidings that nowhere had they found any remnant of the true Church, and that the whole world wondered after the beast. The Vaudois, however, had power given them to maintain their testimony. In the midst of universal apostacy, and in the face of the most terrible persecutions, they bore witness against Rome. And ever as that Church added another error to her creed, the Vaudois added another article to their testimony; and in this way Romish idolatry and gospel truth were developed by equal stages, and an adequate testimony was maintained all through that gloomy period. The stars of the ecclesiastical firmament fell unto the earth, like the untimely figs of the fig-tree; but the lamp of the Alps went not out. The Vaudois, not unconscious of their sacred office, watched their heaven-kindled beacon with the vigilance of men inspired by the hope that it would yet attract the eyes of the world. At length—thrice welcome sight!—the watch-fires of the German reformers, kindled at their own, began to streak the horizon. They knew that the hour of darkness had passed, and that the time was near when the Church would leave her asylum, and go forth to sow the fields of the world with the immortal seed of truth.

We must be permitted to remark here, that the fact that the Waldensian territory is really a part of Italy, and that the Vaudois, or Valdesi, or People of the Valleys (for all three signify the same thing), are strictly an Italian people, invests ITALY with a new and interesting light. In all ages, Pagan as well as Christian, Italy has been the seat of a twofold influence,—the one destructive, the other regenerative. In classic times, Italy sent forth armies to subjugate the world, and letters to enlighten it. Since the Christian era, her mission has been of the same mixed character. She has been at once the seat of idolatry and the asylum of Christianity. Her idolatry is of a grosser and more perfected type than was the worship of Baal of old; and her Christianity possesses a more spiritual character, and a more powerfully operative genius, than did the institute of Moses. We ought, then, to think of Italy as the land of the martyr as well as of the persecutor,—as not only the land whence our Popery has come, which has cost us so many martyrs of whom we are proud, and has caused the loss of so many souls which we mourn,—but also as the fountain of that blessed light which broke mildly on the world in the preaching of John Huss, and more powerfully, a century afterwards, in the reformation of the sixteenth century. Though there was no audible voice, and no visible miracle, the Waldenses were as really chosen to be the witnesses of God during the long night of papal idolatry, as were the Jews to be his witnesses during the night of pagan idolatry. They are sprung, according to the more credible historical accounts, from the unfallen Church of Rome; they are the direct lineal descendants of the primitive Christians of Italy; they never bowed the knee to the modern Baal; their mountain sanctuary has remained unpolluted by idolatrous rites; and if they were called to affix to their testimony the seal of a cruel martyrdom, they did not fall till they had scattered over the various countries of Europe the seed of a future harvest. Their death was a martyrdom endured in behalf of Christendom; and scarcely was it accomplished till they were raised to life again, in the appearance of numerous churches both north and south of the Alps. Why is it that all persons and systems in this world of ours must die in order to enter into life? We enter into spiritual life by the death of our old nature; we enter into eternal life by the death of the body; and Christianity, too, that she might enter into the immortality promised her on earth, had to die. The words of our Lord, spoken in reference to his own death, are true also in reference to the martyrdom of the Waldensian Church:—"Verily verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

[Pg 64]

[Pg 65]

The first question touching this extraordinary people respects their origin. When did they come into being, and of what stock are they sprung? This question forces itself with singular power upon the mind of the traveller, who, after traversing cities and countries covered with darkness palpable as that of Egypt of old, and seeing nought around him but image-worship, lights unexpectedly, in the midst of these mountains, upon a little community, enjoying the

knowledge of the true God, and worshipping Him after the scriptural and spiritual manner of prophets and apostles of old. He naturally seeks for an explanation of a fact so extraordinary. Who kindled that solitary lamp? Their enemies have striven to represent them as dissenters from Rome of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and it is a common error even among ourselves to speak of them as the followers of Peter Waldo, the pious merchant of Lyons, and to date their rise from the year 1160. We cannot here go into the controversy; suffice it to say, that historical documents exist which show that both the Albigenses and the Waldenses were known long before Peter Waldo was heard of. Their own traditions and ancient manuscripts speak of them as having maintained the same doctrine "from time immemorial, in continued descent from father to son, even from the times of the apostles." The Nobla Leyçon,—the Confession of Faith of the Vaudois Church, of the date of 1100,—claims on their behalf the same ancient origin; Ecbert, a writer who flourished in 1160—the year of Peter Waldo—speaks of them as "perverters," who had existed during many ages; and Reinerus, the inquisitor, who lived a century afterwards, calls them the most dangerous of all sects, because the most ancient; "for some say," adds he, "that it has continued to flourish since the time of Sylvester; others, from the time of the apostles." This last is a singular corroboration of the authenticity of the Nobla Leyçon, which refers to the corruptions which began under Sylvester as the cause of their separation from the communion of the Church of Rome. Rorenco, the grand prior of St Roch, who was commissioned to make enquiries concerning them, after hinting that possibly they were detached from the Church by Claude, the good Bishop of Turin, in the eighth century, says "that they were not a new sect in the ninth and tenth centuries." Campian the Jesuit says of them, that they were reputed to be "more ancient than the Roman Church." Nor is it without great weight, as the historian Leger observes, that not one of the Dukes of Savoy or their ministers ever offered the slightest contradiction to the oft-reiterated assertions of the Vaudois, when petitioning for liberty of conscience, "We are descendants," said they, "of those who, from father to son, have preserved entire the apostolical faith in the valleys which we now occupy."^[1] We have no doubt that, were the ecclesiastical archives of Lombardy, especially those of Turin and Milan, carefully searched, documents would be found which would place beyond all doubt what the scattered proofs we have referred to render all but a certainty.

[Pg 66]

[Pg 67]

The historical evidence for the antiquity of the Vaudois Church is greatly strengthened by a consideration of the geographical position of "the Valleys." They lie on what anciently was the great high-road between Italy and France. There existed a frequent intercourse betwixt the Churches of the two countries; pastors and private members were continually going and returning; and what so likely to follow this intercourse as the evangelization of these valleys? There is a tradition extant, that the Apostle Paul visited them, in his journey from Rome to Spain. Be this as it may, one can scarce doubt that the feet of Irenæus, and of other early fathers, trod the territory of the Vaudois, and preached the gospel by the waters of the Pelice, and under the rocks and chestnut trees of Bobbio. Indeed, we can scarce err in fixing the first rise of the Vaudois Churches at even an earlier period,—that of apostolic times. So soon as the Church began to be wasted by persecution, the remote corners of Italy were sought as an asylum; and from the days of Nero the primitive Christians may have begun to gather round those mountains to which the ark of God was ultimately removed, and amid which it so long dwelt.

"I go up to the ancient hills,
Where chains may never be;
Where leap in joy the torrent rills;
Where man may worship God alone, and free.

There shall an altar and a camp
Impregnably arise;
There shall be lit a quenchless lamp,
To shine unwavering through the open skies.

And song shall 'midst the rocks be heard,
And fearless prayer ascend;
While, thrilling to God's holy Word,
The mountain-pines in adoration bend.

And there the burning heart no more
Its deep thought shall suppress;
But the long-buried truth shall pour
Free currents thence, amidst the wilderness."

[Pg 68]

How could a small body of peasants among the mountains have discovered the errors of Rome, and have thrown off her yoke, at a time when the whole of Europe received the one and bowed to the other? This could not have happened in the natural order of things. Above all, if they did not arise till the twelfth or thirteenth century, how came they to frame so elaborate and full a testimony as the *Noble Lesson* against Rome? A Church that has a creed must have a history. Nor was it in a year, or even in a single age, that they could have compiled such a creed. It could acquire form and substance only in the course of centuries,—the Vaudois adding article to article, as Rome added error to error. We can have no reasonable doubt, then, that in the Vaudois

community we have a relic of the primitive Church. Compared with them, the house of Savoy, which ruled so long and rigorously over them, is but of yesterday. They are more ancient than the Roman Church itself. They have come down to us from the world before the papal flood, bearing in their heaven-built and heaven-guarded ark the sacred oracles; and now they stand before us as a witness to the historic truth of Christianity, and a living copy, in doctrine, in government, and in manners, of the Church of the Apostles.

Fain would we tell at length the heroic story of the Vaudois. We use no exaggerated speech,—no rhetorical flourish,—but speak advisedly, when we say, that their history, take it all in all, is the brightest, the purest, the most heroic, in the annals of the world. Their martyr-age lasted five centuries; and we know of nothing, whether we regard the sacredness of the cause, or the undaunted valour, the pure patriotism, and the lofty faith, in which the Vaudois maintained it, that can be compared with their glorious struggle. This is an age of hero-worship. Let us go to the mountains of the Waldenses: there we will find heroes "unsung by poet, by senators unpraised," yet of such gigantic stature, that the proudest champions of ancient Rome are dwarfed in their presence. It was no transient flash of patriotism and valour that broke forth on the soil of the Vaudois: that country saw sixteen generations of heroes, and five centuries of heroic deeds. Men came from pruning their vines or tending their flocks, to do feats of arms which Greece never equalled, and which throw into the shade the proudest exploits of Rome. The Jews maintained the worship of the true God in their country for many ages, and often gained glorious victories; but the Jews were a nation; they possessed an ample territory, rich in resources; they were trained to war, moreover, and marshalled and led on by skilful and courageous chiefs. But the Waldenses were a primitive and simple people; they had neither king nor leader; their only sovereign was Jehovah; their only guides were their *Barbes*. The struggle under the Maccabees was a noble one; but it attained not the grandeur of that of the Vaudois. It was short in comparison; nor do its single exploits, brave as they were, rise to the same surpassing pitch of heroism. When read after the story of the Vaudois, the annals of Greece and Rome even, fruitful though they be in deeds of heroism, appear cold and tame. In short, we know of no other instance in the world in which a great and sacred object has been prosecuted from father to son for such a length of time, with a patriotism so pure, a courage so unshrinking, a devotion so entire, and amidst such a multitude of sacrifices, sufferings, and woes, as in the case of the Vaudois. The incentives to courage which have stimulated others to brave death were wanting in their case. If they triumphed, they had no admiring circus to welcome them with shouts, and crown them with laurel; and if they fell, they knew that there awaited their ashes no marble tomb, and that no lay of poet would ever embalm their memory. They looked to a greater Judge for their reward. This was the source of that patriotism, the purest the world has ever seen, and of that valour, the noblest of which the annals of mankind make mention.

Innocent III., who hid under a sanctimonious guise the boundless ambition and quenchless malignity of Lucifer, was the first to blow the trumpet of extermination against the poor Vaudois. And from the middle of the thirteenth to the end of the seventeenth century they suffered not fewer than thirty persecutions. During that long period they could not calculate upon a single year's immunity from invasion and slaughter. From the days of Innocent their history becomes one long harrowing tale of papal plots, interdicts, excommunications, of royal proscriptions and perfidies, of attack, of plunder, of rapine, of massacre, and of death in every conceivable and horrible way,—by the sword, by fire, and by unutterable tortures and torments. The Waldenses had no alternative but to submit to these, or deny their Saviour. Yet, driven to arms,—ever their last resource,—they waxed valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. They taught their enemies that the battle was not to the strong. When the cloud gathered round their hills, they removed their wives and little ones to some rock-girt valley, to the caverns of which they had taken the precaution of removing their corn and oil, and even their baking ovens; and there, though perhaps they did not muster more than a thousand fighting men in all, they waited, with calm confidence in God, the onset of their foes. In these encounters, sustained by Heaven, they performed prodigies of valour. The combined armies of France and Piedmont recoiled from their shock. Their invaders were almost invariably overthrown, sometimes even annihilated; and their sovereigns, the Dukes of Savoy, on whose memory there rests the indelible blot of having pursued this loyal, industrious, and virtuous people with ceaseless and incredible injustice, cruelty, treachery, and perfidy, finding that they could not subdue them, were glad to offer them terms of peace, and grant them new guarantees of the quiet possession of their ancient territory. Thus an invisible omnipotent arm was ever extended over the Vaudois and their land, delivering them miraculously in times of danger, and preserving them as a peculiar people, that by their instrumentality Jehovah might accomplish his designs of mercy towards the world.

Nor were the Waldenses content simply to maintain their faith. Even when fighting for existence, they recognised their obligations as a missionary Church, and strove to diffuse over the surrounding countries the light that burned amid their own mountains. Who has not heard of the Pra de la Torre, in the valley of Angrona? This is a beautiful little meadow, encircled with a barrier of tremendous mountains, and watered by a torrent, which, flowing from an Alpine summit, *La Sella Vecchia*, descends with echoing noise through the dark gorges and shining dells of the deep and romantic valley. This was the inner sanctuary of the Vaudois. Here their *Barbes* sat; here was their school of the prophets; and from this spot were sent forth their pastors and missionaries into France, Germany, and Britain, as well as into their own valleys. It was a native

and missionary of these valleys, Gualtero Lollard, which gave his name, in the fourteenth century, to the Lollards of England, whose doctrines were the day-spring of the Reformation in our own country. The zeal of the Vaudois was seen in the devices they fell upon to distribute the Bible, and along with that a knowledge of the gospel. Colporteurs travelled as pedlars; and, after displaying their laces and jewels, they drew forth, and offered for sale, or as a gift, a gem of yet greater value. In this way the Word of God found entrance alike into cottage and baronial castle. It is a supposed scene of this kind which the following lines depict:—

Oh! lady fair, these silks of mine
Are beautiful and rare,—
The richest web of the Indian loom
Which beauty's self might wear;
And these pearls are pure and mild to behold,
And with radiant light they vie:
I have brought them with me a weary way;—
Will my gentle lady buy?

Oh! lady fair, I have got a gem,
Which a purer lustre flings
Than the diamond flash of the jewell'd crown
On the lofty brow of kings:
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price,
Whose virtue shall not decay,—
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee,
And a blessing on the way!

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,
As a small and meagre book,
Unchased by gold or diamond gem,
From his folding robe he took.
Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price;—
May it prove as such to thee!
Nay, keep thy gold—I ask it not;
For the Word of God is free!

And she hath left the old gray halls,
Where an evil faith hath power,
And the courtly knights of her father's train,
And the maidens of her bower;
And she hath gone to the Vaudois vale,
By lordly feet untrod,
Where the poor and needy of earth are rich
In the perfect love of God!

But, turning from this inviting theme, to which volumes only could do justice, let us lift the curtain, and look at this simple, heroic people, as they appear now, after the "great tribulation" of five centuries. The Protestant population of "the Valleys" is 22,000 and upwards. They have fifteen churches and parishes, and twenty-five persons in all engaged in the work of the ministry. This was their state in 1851. Since then, two other parishes, Pignerolo and Turin, have been added. To each church a school is attached, with numerous sub-schools. It is to the honour of the Vaudois that they led the way in that system of general education which is extending itself, more or less, in every State in Europe. Repeated edicts of the Waldensian Table rendered it imperative upon the community to provide means of religious and elementary education for all the children capable of receiving it. They have a college at La Tour, fifteen primary schools, and upwards of one hundred secondary schools. The whole Waldensian youth is at school during winter. In their congregations, the sacrament of the Supper is dispensed four times in the year; and it is rare that a young person fails to become a communicant after arriving at the proper age. There are two preaching days at every dispensation of the ordinance; and the collections made on these occasions are devoted to the poor. There was at that time no plate at the church-door on ordinary Sabbaths; and no contributions were made by the people for the support of the gospel. I presume this error is rectified now, however; for it was then in contemplation to adopt the plan in use in Scotland, and elsewhere, of a penny-a-week subscription. The stipends of the Waldensian pastors are paid from funds contributed by England and Holland. Each receives fifteen hundred francs yearly,—about sixty-two pounds sterling. Their incomes are supplemented by a small glebe,

which is attached to each *living*. The contribution for the schools and the hospitals is compulsory. In their college, in 1851, there were seventy-five students. Some were studying for the medical profession, some for commercial pursuits; others were qualifying as teachers, and some few as pastors.

The Waldenses inhabit their hills, much as the Jews did their Palestine. Each man lives on his ancestral acres; and his farm or vineyard is not too large to be cultivated by himself and his family. There are amongst them no titles of honour, and scarce any distinctions of rank and circumstances. They are a nation of vine-dressers, husbandmen, and shepherds. In their habits they are frugal and simple. Their peaceful deportment and industrial virtues have won the admiration, and extorted the acknowledgments, even of their enemies. In the cultivation of their fields, in the breed and management of their cattle and their flocks, in the arrangements of their dairies, and in the cleanliness of their cabins, they far excel the rest of the Piedmontese. To enlarge their territory, they have had recourse to the same device with the Jews of old; and the Vaudois mountains, like the Judæan hills, exhibit in many places terraces, rising in a continuous series up the hill-side, sown with grain or planted with the vine. Every span of earth is cultivated. [Pg 75]

The Vaudois excel the rest of the Piedmontese in point of morals, just as much as they excel them in point of intelligence and industry. All who have visited their abodes, and studied their character, admit, that they are incomparably the most moral community on the Continent of Europe. When a Vaudois commits a crime,—a rare occurrence,—the whole valleys mourn, and every family feels as if a cloud rested on its own reputation. No one can pass a day among them without remarking the greater decorum of their deportment, and the greater kindness and civility of their address. I do not mean to say that, either in respect of intelligence or piety, they are equal to the natives of our own highly favoured Scotland. They are surrounded on all sides by degradation and darkness; they have just escaped from ages of proscription; books are few among their mountains; and they have suffered, too, from the inroads of French infidelity; an age of Moderatism has passed over them, as over ourselves; and from these evils they have not yet completely recovered. Still, with all these drawbacks, they are immensely superior to any other community abroad; and, in simplicity of heart, and purity of life, present us with no feeble transcript of the primitive Church, of which they are the representatives.

The lotus-flower is said to lift its head above the muddy current of the Nile at the precise moment of sunrise. It was indicative, perhaps, of the dawning of a new day upon the Vaudois and Italy, that that Church experienced lately a revival. That revival was almost immediately followed by the boon of political and social emancipation, and by a new and enlarged sphere of spiritual action. The year 1848 opened the doors of their ancient prison, and called them to go forth and evangelize. Formerly, all attempts to extend themselves beyond their mountain abode, and to mingle with the nations around them, were uniformly followed by disaster. The time was not come; and the integrity of their faith, and the accomplishment of their high mission, would have been perilled by their leaving their asylum. But when the revolutions of 1848 threw the north of Italy open to their action, then came forth the decree of Charles Albert, declaring the Vaudois free subjects of Piedmont, and the Church of "the Valleys" a free Church. The disabilities under which the Waldenses groaned up till this very recent period may well astonish us, now that we look back to them. Up till 1848 the Waldensian was proscribed, in both his civil and religious rights, beyond the limits of his own valleys. Out of his special territory he dared not possess a foot-breadth of land; and, if obliged to sell his paternal fields to a stranger, he could not buy them back again. He was shut out from the colleges of his country; he could not practise as a member of any of the learned professions; every avenue to distinction and wealth was closed against him,—his only crime being his religion. He could not marry but with one of his own people; he could not build a sanctuary,—he could not even bury his dead,—beyond the limits of "the Valleys." The children were often taken away and trained in the idolatrous rites of Romanism, and the unhappy parents had no remedy. They were slandered, too, to their sovereigns, as men marked by hideous deformities; and great was the surprise of Charles Albert to find, on a visit he paid to the Valleys but a little before granting their emancipation, that the Vaudois were not the monsters he had been taught to believe. I have been told, that to this very day they carry their dead to the grave in open coffins, to give ocular demonstration of the falsehood of the calumnies propagated by their enemies, that the corpses of these heretics are sometimes consumed by invisible flames, or carried off by evil spirits before burial. But now all these disabilities are at an end. The year 1848 swept them all away; and a bulwark of constitutional feeling and action has since grown up around the Vaudois, cutting off the prospect of these disabilities ever being re-imposed, unless, indeed, Austria and France should combine to put down the Piedmontese constitution. But hitherto that nation which gave religious liberty to the people of God has had its own political liberties wonderfully protected. [Pg 76]

The year 1848, then, was the "exodus" of the Vaudois. And why were they brought out of their house of bondage? Surely they have yet a work to do. Their great mission, which was to bear witness for the truth during the domination of Antichrist, they nobly fulfilled; but are they to have no part in diffusing over the plains of Italy that light which they so long and so carefully preserved? This undoubtedly is their mission. All the leadings of Providence declare it to be so. They were visited with revival, brought from their Alpine asylum, had full liberty of action given them, all at the moment that Italy had begun to be open to the gospel. They are the native [Pg 77]

evangelists of their own country: let them remember their own and their fathers' sufferings, and avenge themselves on Rome, not with the sword, but the Bible. And let British Christians aid them in this great work, assured that the door to Rome and Italy lies through the valleys of the Vaudois.

The last day of my sojourn in the Waldensian territory was Sabbath the 19th of October, and I worshipped with that people,—rare enjoyment!—in their sanctuary. The day broke amid high winds and torrents of rain. The clouds now veiled, now revealed, the hill-side, with its variously tinted foliage, and its white torrents dashing headlong to the vale. The mighty form of the Castelluzzo was seen struggling through mists; and high above the winds rose the roar of the swollen waters. At a quarter before ten, the church-bell, heard through the pauses of the storm, came pealing from the heights. The old church of La Tour,—the new and more elegant fabric which stands in the village was not then opened,—is sweetly placed at the base of the Castelluzzo, embowered amid vines and fragrant foliage, and commanding a noble view of the plains of Piedmont. Even amidst the driving mists and showers its beauty could not fail to be felt. The scenery was—

"A blending of all beauties, streams and dells,
Fruits, foliage, crag, wood, corn-field, mountain, vine."

General Beckwith did me the honour to call at my hotel, and I walked with him to the church. Outside the building—for worship had not commenced—were numerous little conversational parties; and around it lay the Vaudois dead, sleeping beneath the shadow of their giant rock, and free, at last and for ever, from the oppressor. They had found another "exodus" from their house of bondage than that which King Charles Albert had granted their living descendants. We entered, and found the schoolmaster reading the liturgy. This service consists of two chapters of the Bible, with at times the reflections of Ostervald annexed; during it the congregation came dropping in,—the husbandmen and herdsmen of the Val Lucerna,—and took their seats. In a little the elders entered in a body, and seated themselves round a table in front of the pulpit. Next came the pastor, habited, like our Scotch ministers, in gown and bands, when the regent instantly ceased. The pastor began the public worship by giving out a psalm. He next offered a prayer, read the ten commandments, and then preached. The sermon was an half-hour's length precisely, and was recited, not read; for I was told the Waldenses have a strong dislike to read discourses. The minister of La Tour is an old man, and was trained under an order of things unfavourable to that higher standard of pulpit qualification, and that fuller manifestation of evangelical and spiritual feeling, which, I am glad to say, characterize all the younger Waldensian pastors. The people listened with great attention to his scriptural discourse; but I was sorry to observe that there were few Bibles among them,—a circumstance that may be explained perhaps with reference to the state of the weather, and the long distance which many of them have to travel. The storm had the effect at least of thinning the audience, and bringing it down from about 800, its usual number, to 500 or so. The church was an oblong building, with the pulpit on one of the side walls, and a deep gallery, resting on thick, heavy pillars, on the other. The men and women occupied separate places. With this exception, I saw nothing to remind me that I was out of Scotland. One may find exactly such another congregation in almost any part of our Scottish Highlands, with this difference, that the complexions of the Vaudois are darker than that of our Highlanders. They have the same hardy, weather-beaten features, and the same robust frames. I saw many venerable and some noble heads among them,—men who would face the storms of the Alps for the lost wanderer of the flock, and the edicts and soldiers of Rome for their home-steads and altars. There they sat, worshipping their fathers' God, amid their fathers' mountains,—victorious over twelve centuries of proscription and persecution, and holding their sanctuaries and their hills in defiance of Europe. In the evening Professor Malan preached in the schoolhouse of Margarita, a small village on the ascent from La Tour to Castelluzzo. He discoursed with great unction, and the crowded audience hung upon his lips.

On my way back to my hotel, Professor Malan narrated to me a touching anecdote, which I must here put down. Monsignor Mazzarella was a judge in one of the High Courts of Sicily; but when the atrocities of the re-action began, he refused to be a tool of the Government, and resigned his office. He came to Turin, like numerous other political refugees; and in one of the reunions of the workmen, he learned the doctrine of "justification by faith." Soon thereafter, that is, in the summer of 1851, he and a few companions paid a visit to the Vaudois Church. A public meeting, over which Professor Malan presided, was held at La Tour, to welcome M. Mazzarella and his friends. Professor Malan expressed his delight at seeing them in "the Valleys;" welcomed them as the first fruits of Italy; and, in the name of the Vaudois Church, gave them the right hand of fellowship. The reply of the converted exiles was truly affecting, and moved the assembly to tears. Rising up, Mazzarella said, "We are the children of your persecutors; but the sons have other hearts than the fathers. We have renounced the religion of the oppressor, and embraced that of the Vaudois, whom our ancestors so long persecuted. You have been the people of God, the confessors of the truth; and here before you this night I confess the sin of my fathers in putting your fathers to death." Mazzarella at this day is an evangelist in Genoa. In his speech we hear the first utterance of repentant Christendom. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

[Pg 78]

[Pg 79]

[Pg 80]

I had now been well nigh a week in "the Valleys." A dream long and fondly cherished had become a reality; and next morning I started for Turin.

The eventful history of the Vaudois teaches one lesson at least, which we Protestants would do well to ponder at this hour. The measures of the Church of Rome are quick, summary, and on a scale commensurate with the danger. Her motto is instant, unpitying, unsparing, utter extermination of all that oppose her. Twice over has the human mind revolted against her authority, and twice over has she met that revolt, not with argument, but with the sword. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Waldensian movement had grown to such a head, that the dominion of Rome was in imminent jeopardy. Had she delayed, the Reformation would have been anticipated by some centuries. She did not delay. She cried for help to the warriors of France and Savoy; and, by the help of some hundred thousand soldiers, she put down the Waldensian movement as an aggressive power. The next revolt against her authority was the Reformation. Here again she boldly confronted the danger. She grasped her old weapon; and, by the help of the sword and the Jesuits, she put down that movement in one half the countries of Europe, and greatly weakened it in the other half.

We are now witnessing a third revolt against her authority; and it remains to be seen how the Church of Rome will deal with it. Will she now adopt half measures? Will she now falter and draw back,—she that never before feared enemy or spared foe? Will that Church that quenched in blood the Protestantism of the Waldenses,—that put down the Reformation in France by one terrible blow,—that by the help of dungeons and racks banished the light from Italy and Spain,—will that Church, we ask, spare the Protestantism of Britain? What folly and infatuation to think that she will! What matters it that, in rooting out British Protestantism, she should shed oceans of blood, and sound the death-knell of a whole nation? These are but dust in the balance to her: her dominion must be maintained at all costs. Her motto still is,—let Rome triumph though the heavens should fall. But she tells us that she repents. Repents, does she? She has grown pitiful, and tender hearted, has she? She fears blood now, and starts at the cry of murdered nations! Ah! she repents; but it is her clemency, not her crimes, of which she repents. She repents that she did not make one wide St Bartholomew of Europe; that when she planted the stake for Huss, and Cranmer, and Wishart, she did not plant a million of stakes. Then the Reformation would not have been. Yes, she repents, deeply, bitterly repents, her fatal blunder. But it will not be her fault, the *Univers* assures us, if she have to repent such a blunder a second time. Let us hear the priests speaking through one of the country papers in France:—"The wars of religion were not deplorable catastrophes; these great butcheries renewed the life of France. The incense cast away the smell of the corpses, and psalms covered the noise of angry shouts. Holy water washed away all the bloody stains. With the Inquisition, the most beautiful weather succeeded to storms, and the fires that burned the heretics shone like supernatural torches." The hand that wrote these lines would more gladly light the faggot. Let only the present regime in France last a few years, and the priests will again rejoice in seeing the colour of heretic blood. There cannot and will not be peace in the world, they say, till for every Protestant a gibbet or stake has been erected, and not one man left to carry tidings to posterity that ever there was such a thing as Protestantism on the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM TURIN TO NOVARA.

At Turin begins Pilgrimage to Rome—Description of *Diligence*—Dora Susina—Plain of Lombardy—Its Boundaries—Nursed by the Alps—Lessons taught thereby—The Colina—Inauspicious Sunset—The Road to Milan—The Po—Its Source—Tributaries and Function—Evening—Home remembered in a Foreign Land—Inference thence regarding Futurity—Thunderstorm among the Alps—Thunderstorm on the Plain of Lombardy—Grandeur of the Lightning—Enter Novara at Day-break.

I HAD two objects in view in crossing the Alps. The first was to visit the land of the Vaudois; the second was to see Rome. The first of these objects I had accomplished in part; the second remained to be undertaken.

This plain of Piedmont was the richest my foot had ever trodden; but often did I turn my eyes wistfully towards the Apennines, which, like a veil, shut out the Italy of the Romans and the City of the Seven Hills. At Turin, which the Po so sweetly waters, and over which the snow-clad hills of the Swiss fling their noble shadows, properly begins my journey to Rome.

I started in the *diligence* for Milan about four of the afternoon of the 21st October. Did you ever, reader, set foot in a *diligence*? It is a castle mounted on wheels, rising storey upon storey to a fearful height. It is roomy withal, and has apartments enough within its leathern walls for well-nigh the population of a village. There is the glass *coupé* in front, the drawing-room of the house. There is the *interieur*, which you may compare, if you please, to the dining-room, only there you do not dine; and there is the *rotundo*, a sort of cabin attached, the limbo of the establishment, in which you may find half-a-dozen unhappy wights for days and nights doing penance. Then, in the

very fore-front of this moving castle—hung in mid air, as it were—there is the *banquette*. It is the roomiest of all, and has, moreover, spacious untenanted spaces behind, where you may stow away your luggage; and, being the loftiest compartment, it commands the country you may happen to traverse. On this account the *banquette* was the place I almost always selected, unless when so unfortunate as to find it already bespoke. Half-hours are of no value in the south of the Alps, and a very liberal allowance of this commodity was made us before starting. At last, however, the formidable process of loading was completed, and away we went, rumbling heavily over the streets of Turin to the crack of the postilion's whip and the music of the horses' bells.

On emerging from the buildings of the city, we crossed the fine bridge over the Dora Susina, an Alpine stream, which attains almost the dignity of a river, and which, swollen by recent rains, was hurrying on to join the Po. Our course now lay almost due east, over the great plain of Lombardy; and there are few rides in any part of the world which can bring the traveller such a succession of varied, rich, and sublime sights. The plain itself, level as the floor of one's library, and wearing a rich carpeting, green at all seasons, of fruits and verdure, ran out till it touched the horizon. On the north rose the Alps, a magnificent wall, of stature so stupendous, that they seemed to prop the heavens. On the south were the gentler Apennines. Between these two magnificent barriers, this goodly plain—of which I know not if the earth contains its equal—stretches away till it terminates in the blue line of the Adriatic. On its ample bosom is many a celebrated spot, many an interesting object. It has several princely cities, in which art is cultivated, and trade flourishes to all the extent which Austrian fetters permit. Its old historic towns are numerous. The hoar of eld is upon them. It has rags of castles and fortresses which literally have braved for a thousand years the battle and the breeze. It has spots where empires have been lost and won, and where the dead of the tented field sleep their dreamless sleep. It has fine old cathedrals, with their antique carvings, their recumbent statues of old-world bishops, and their Scripture pieces by various masters, sorely faded; and here and there, above the rich foliage of its various woods, like the tall mast of a ship at sea, is seen the handsome and lofty campanile, so peculiar to the architecture of Lombardy.

[Pg 85]

The great Alps look down with most benignant aspect upon this plain. They seem quite proud of it, and nurse it with the care and tenderness of a parent. Noble rivers not a few—the Ticino, the Adige, and streams and torrents without number—do they send down, to keep its beauty ever fresh. These streams cross and re-cross its green bosom in all directions, forming by their interlacings a curious network of silvery lines, like the bright threads in the mine, or the white veins in the porphyritic slab. Observe this little flower, with its bright petals, growing by the wayside. That humble flower owes its beauty to yonder chain. From the frozen summits of the Alps come the waters at which it daily drinks. And when the dog-days come, and a fiery sun looks down upon the plain from a sky that is cloudless for months together, and when every leaf droops, and even the tall poplar seems to bow itself beneath the intolerable heat, the mountains, pitying the panting plain, send down their cool breezes to revive it. Would that from the lofty pinnacles of rank and talent there descended upon the lower levels of society an influence equally wholesome and beneficent! Were there more streams from the mountain, there would be more fruits upon the plain. The world would not be the scorched desert which it is, in which the vipers of envy and discontent hiss and sting; but a fragrant garden, full of the fruits of social order and of moral principle. Truly, man might learn many a useful lesson from the earth on which he treads: the great, to dispense freely out of their abundance,—for by dispensing they but multiply their blessings, as Mont Blanc, by sending down its streams to enrich the plain, feeds those snows which are its glory and crown,—and the humble, the lesson of a thankful reciprocation. This plain does not drink in the waters of the Alps, and sullenly refuse to own its obligations. Like a duteous child, it brings its yearly offering to the foot of Mont Blanc,—fields of golden wheat, countless vines with their blood-red clusters, fruits of every name, and flowers of every hue;—such is the noble tribute which this plain, year by year, lays at the feet of its august parent. There is but one drawback to its prosperity. Two sombre shadows fall gloomily athwart its surface. These are Austria and Rome.

[Pg 86]

The plain of Lombardy is so broad, and the road to Milan by Novara is so much on a level with its general surface, that the eye catches the distant Apennines only at the more elevated points. The screen which here, and for miles after leaving Turin, shuts out the view of the Apennines, is the Colina. The Colina is a range of lovely hills, which rise to a height of rather more than 1200 feet, and run eastward along the plain a few miles south of the Milan road. Soft and rich in their covering, picturesque in their forms, and indented with numerous dells, they look like miniature Alps set down on the plain, nearly equidistant from the great white hills on the north and the purple peaks on the south. The sun was near his setting; and his level rays, passing through fields of vapour,—presages of storm,—and shorn of the fiery brilliancy which is wont at eve to set these hills on a blaze, fell softly upon the dome of the Superga, and lighted up the white villas which stud the mountain by hundreds and hundreds throughout its whole extent. Vividly relieved by the deep azure of the vineyards, and looking, from their distance, no bigger than single blocks, these villas reminded one of a shower of marble, freshly fallen, and glittering in pearly whiteness in the setting rays.

[Pg 87]

The road, which to me had an almost sacred character, being the beginning of my journey to Rome, was a straight line,—straight as the arrow's flight,—between fields of rich meadow land,

and rows of elms and poplars, which ran on and on, till, in the far distance, they appeared to converge to a point. It was a broad, macadamized, substantial highway, of about thirty feet in width, having a white line of curb-stones placed eight or ten paces apart; outside of which was an excellent pathway for foot passengers. On the left rose the Alps, calm and majestic, clothed in the purple shadows of evening.

I have mentioned the Po as flowing past Turin. This stream is doubtless the relic of that mighty flood which covered, at some former period, the vast space between the Alps and the Apennines, from the Graian and Cottian chains on the west, to the shores of the Adriatic on the east. As the waters drained off, this central channel alone was left, to receive and convey to the sea the innumerable torrents which are formed by the springs and snows of the mountains. The noble river thus formed is called the Po,—the pride of Italy, and the king of its streams. The Greeks, who clothed it with fable, and drowned Phaeton in its stream, called it Eridanus. Its Roman appellation was Padus, which in course of time resolved itself into its present name, the Po. Unlike the Nile, which rolls in solemn and solitary majesty through Egypt without permitting one solitary rill to mingle with its flood, the Po welcomes every tributary, and accepts its help in discharging its great function of giving drink to every flower, and tree, and field, and city, in broad Lombardy. It receives, in its course through Piedmont alone, not fewer than fifty-three torrents and rivers; and in depth and grandeur of stream it is not unworthy of the praises which the Greek and Roman poets lavished upon it. The cradle of this noble stream is placed in the centre of the ancient territory of the Vaudois, whose most beautiful mountain, Monte Viso, is its nursing parent. A fountain of crystal clearness, placed half-way up this hill, is its source. Thence it goes forth to water Piedmont and Venetian-Lombardy, and to mingle at last with the clear wave of the Adriatic,—emblem of those living waters which were to go forth from this same land into all quarters of Europe.

[Pg 88]

The sun had now set; and I marked that this evening no golden beams among the mountains, no burning peaks, attended his departure. He went in silent sadness, like a friend quitting a circle which he fears may before his return be visited with calamity. With him departed the glory of the scene. The vine-clad Colina, erst sparkling with villas, put out its lights, and resolved itself into a dark bank, which leaned, cloud-like, against the sky. The stupendous white piles on the left drew a thin night vapour around them, and retired from the scene, like some mighty spirit gathering his robe about him, and leaving the earth, which his presence had enlightened, dark and solitary. The plain lay before us a sombre expanse, in which all objects—towns, spires, and forests—were fast blending into one darkly-shaded and undefined picture. Dwellers in *diligences*, as well as dwellers in hotels, must sleep if they can; but the hour for "turning in" had scarce arrived, and meanwhile, I remember, my thoughts took strongly a homeward direction.

[Pg 89]

With these, of course, I shall not trouble the reader; only I must be permitted to mention a misconception into which I had fallen, in connection with my journey, and into which it is possible others may fall in similar circumstances. One is apt to imagine, before starting, that should he reach such a country as Italy, he will there feel as if home was very distant, and the events of his former life far removed in point of time. He thinks that a journey across the Alps has somehow a talismanic power to change him. He crosses the Alps, but finds that he is the same man still. Home has come with him: the friendships, the joys, the sorrows, of his past existence are as near as ever; nay, far nearer, for now he is alone with them; and though he goes southward, and kingdoms and mountain-chains are between him and his native country, he cannot feel that he is a foot-breadth more distant than ever. He moves about through strange lands in a shroud of home feelings and recollections.

How wretched, thought I, the man whom guilt chases from his country! He flies to distant lands in the hope of shaking off the remembrance of his crime. He finds that, go where he will, the spectre dogs his steps. In Paris, in Milan, in Rome, the grizzly form starts up before him. He must change, not his country, but his heart—himself—before he can shake off his companion.

May not the same principle be applicable, in some extent, to our passage from earth into the world beyond? When at home in Scotland, I had thought of Italy as a distant country; but now that I was in Italy, Scotland seemed very near—much nearer than Italy had done when in Scotland. We who are dwellers on earth think of the state beyond as very remote; but once there, may we not feel as if earth was in close proximity to us,—as if, in fact, the two states were divided by but a narrow gulph? Certain it is that the passage across it will work in us no change; and, like the stranger in a foreign country, we shall enter with an eternal shroud of joys and sorrows, springing out of the deeds and events of our present existence.

[Pg 90]

I found that if in this region the day had its beauty, the night had its sublimity and terrors. I had years before become familiar with the phenomena of thunder-storms among the Alps; and one who has seen lightning only in the sombre sky of Britain can scarce imagine its intense brilliancy in these more southern latitudes. With us it breaks with a red fiery flicker; there it bursts upon you like the sun, and pours a flood of noonday light over earth and sky. One evening, in particular, I shall never forget, on which I saw this phenomenon in circumstances highly favourable to its finest effect. I had walked out from Geneva to pass a few hours with the Tronchin family, whose mansion stands on the southern shores of the lake. It was evening; and the deep rolling of the thunder gave us warning that a storm had come on. We stepped out upon

the lawn to enjoy the spectacle; for in the vicinity of the Alps, whose summits attract the fluid, the lightning is seldom dangerous to life. All was dark as midnight; not even the front of the mansion could we see. In a moment the flash came; and then it was day,—boundless, glorious day. All nature was set before us as if under the light of a cloudless sun. The lawn, the blue lake, the distant Alpine summits, the landscape around, with its pines, villas, and vineyards, all leaped out of the womb of night, stood in vivid intense splendour before the eye, and in a twinkling was again gone. This amazing transition from midnight to noonday, and from noonday to midnight, was repeated again and again. I was now to witness the sublimities of a thunder-storm on the plain of Lombardy.

[Pg 91]

Right before us, on the far-off horizon, gleams of light began to shoot along the sky. The play of the electric fluid was so rapid and incessant, as to resemble rather the continuous flow of light from its fountain, than the fitful flashes of lightning. At times these gleams would mantle the sky with all the soft beauty of moonlight, and at others they would dart angrily and luridly athwart the horizon. Soon the storm assumed a grander form. A ball of fire would suddenly blaze forth, in livid, fiery brilliancy; and, remaining motionless, as it were, for an instant, would then shoot out lateral streams or rays, coloured sometimes like the rainbow, and quivering and fluttering like the outspread wings of eagles. One's imagination could almost conceive of it as being a real bird, the ball answering to the body, while the flashes flung out from it resembled the wings, which were of so vast a spread, that they touched the Apennines on the one hand, and the Alps on the other.

The storm took yet another form, and one that increased the sublimity of the scene, by adding a slight feeling of uneasiness to the admiration with which we had contemplated it so far. A cloud of pitchy darkness rose in the south, and crossed the plain, shedding deepest night in its track, and shooting its fires downward on the earth as it came onwards. It passed right over our heads, enveloping us for the while (like some mighty archer, with quiver full of arrows) in a shower of flaming missiles. The interval between the flashes was brief,—so very brief, that we were scarcely sensible of any interval at all. There was not more than four seconds between them. The light was full and strong, as if myriads and myriads of bude lights had been kindled on the summits of the Apennines. In short, it was day while it lasted, and every object was visible, as if made so by the light of the sun. The horses which dragged our vehicle along the road,—the postilion with the red facings on his dress,—the meadows and mulberry woods which bordered our path,—the road itself, stretching away and away for miles, with its rows of tall poplars, and its white curb-stones, dotted with waggons and couriers, and a few foot-passengers,—and the red autumnal leaves, as they fell in swirling showers in the gust,—all were visible. Indeed, we may be said to have performed several miles of our journey under broad daylight, excepting that these sudden revelations of the face of nature alternated with moments of profoundest night. At length the big rain-drops came rattling to the earth; and, to protect ourselves, we drew the thick leathern curtain of the *banquette*, buttoning it tight down all around. It kept out the rain, but not the lightning. The seams and openings of the covering seemed glowing lines of fire, as if the *diligence* had been literally engulfed in an ocean of living flame. The whole heavens were in a roar. The Apennines called to the Alps; the Alps shouted to the Apennines; and the plain between quaked and trembled at the awful voice. At length the storm passed away to the north, and found its final goal amid the mountains, where for hours afterwards the thunder continued to growl, and the lightnings to sport.

[Pg 92]

Order being now restored among the elements, we endeavoured to snatch an hour's sleep. It was but a dreamy sort of slumber, which failed to bestow entire unconsciousness to external objects. Faded towns and tall campaniles seemed to pass by in a ghost-like procession, which was interrupted only by the arrival of the *diligence* at the various stages, where we had to endure long, weary halts. So passed the night. At the first dawn we entered Novara. It lay, spread out on the dusky plain, an irregular patch of black, with the clear, silvery crescent of a moon hanging above it.

[Pg 93]

CHAPTER VII.

THE INTRODUCTION.

Novara—Examination of Passports—Dawn—Monks prefer Dim Light to Clear—Battle of Novara, and its Results—The Ticino—Croats—Austrian Frontier and Dogana—Examination of Books and Baggage—Grandeur of the Alps from this Point—Contrast betwixt the Rivers and the Governments of Italy—Proof from thence of the Fall—Providence "from seeming Evil educing Good"—Rich but Monotonous Scenery of the Plain—Youth of the Alps, and Decay of the Lombard nations—The only Remedy—An Expelled Democrat—First View of Milan.

[Pg 94]

NOVARA, of course, like all decent towns in Lombardy and elsewhere, at four in the morning was a-bed, and our heavy vehicle, as its harsh echoes broke roughly on the silent streets, sounded strangely loud. We were driven right into a courtyard, to have our passports examined. We had left Turin the evening before, with a clean bill of political health, duly certified by three legations,

—the Sardinian, the English, and the Austrian; and in so short a journey—not to speak of the flood and fire we had passed through—it was scarce possible that we could have contracted fresh pollution. We were examined anew, however, lest the plague-spot should have broken out upon us. All was found right, and we were let go to a neighbouring restaurant, where we swallowed a cup of coffee,—our only meal betwixt Turin and Milan. After a full hour's halt, we re-mounted the *diligence*, and set forth.

[Pg 95]

On emerging from the streets of the city, I found the east in the glow of dawn. Still, and pure, and calm broke the light; and under its ray the rich plain awoke into beauty, forgetful of the fiery bolts which had smitten it, and the darkness and destruction which had so lately passed across it. "Hail, holy light!" exclaims the bard of "Paradise." Yes, light is holy. It is undefiled and pure, as when "God saw the light that it was good." Man has ravaged the earth and reddened the seas; but light has escaped his contaminating touch, and is still as God made it, unless, indeed, when man imprisons it within the stained glass of the cathedral, and then obligingly helps its dimness by lighting a score or so of tapers. Did no monk ever think of putting a stained window in the east, and compelling the sun to ogle the world through spectacles? "The light is good," said He who created it, as He saw it darting its first pure beam across creation. Not so, says the Puseyite; it is not good unless it is coloured.

I looked with interest on the plains around Novara; for there, albeit no trace of the bloody fray remains, the army of Charles Albert in 1848 met the host of Radetzky; and there the fate of the campaign for Italian independence was decided. The battle which was fought on these plains led to the destruction of King Charles Albert, but not to the destruction of his kingdom of Sardinia,—though why Radetzky did not follow up his victory by a march on Turin, is to this hour a mystery. Nay, though it sounds a little paradoxical, it is probable that this battle, by destroying the king, saved the kingdom. Had Charles Albert survived till the re-action set in 1849 and 1850, there is too much reason to fear, from his antecedents, that he would have thrown himself into the current with the rest of the Italian rulers; and so Sardinia would have missed the path of constitutional liberty and material development which it has since, under King Victor Emanuel, so happily pursued. Had that happened, the horizon of Italy, dark as it is at this hour, would have been still darker, and the peninsula, from the Alps to Sicily, would not have contained a single spot where the hunted friends of liberty could have found asylum.

[Pg 96]

We soon approached the Ticino, the boundary between Sardinia and Austrian Lombardy. The Ticino is a majestic river, here spanned by one of the finest bridges in Italy. It contains eleven arches; is of the granite of Mount Torfano; and, like almost all the great modern works in Italy, was commenced by Napoleon, though finished only after his fall. Here, then, was the gate of Austria; and seated at that gate I saw three Croats,—fit keepers of Austrian order.

I was not ignorant of the hand these men had had in the suppression of the revolution of 1848, and of the ruthless tragedies they were said to have enacted in Milan and other cities of Lombardy; and I rode up to them in the eager desire of scrutinizing their features, and reading there the signs of that ferocity which had given them such wide-spread but evil renown. They sat basking themselves on a bench in front of the Dogana, with their muskets and bayonets glittering in the sun. They were lads of about eighteen, of decidedly low stature, of square build, and strongly muscular. They looked in capital condition, and gave every sign that the air of Lombardy agreed with them, and that they had had their own share at least of its corn and wine. They wore blue caps, gray duffle greatcoats like those used by our Highlanders, light blue pantaloons fitting closely their thick short leg, and boots which rose above the ankle, and laced in front. The prevailing expression on their broad swarthy faces was not ferocity, but stolidity. Their eyes were dull, and contrasted strikingly with the dark fiery glances of the children of the land. They seemed men of appetites rather than passions; and, if guilty of cruel deeds, were likely to be so from the dull, cold, unreflecting ferocity of the bull-dog, rather than from the warm impulsive instincts of the nobler animals. In stature and feature they were very much the barbarian, and were admirably fitted for being what they were,—the tools of the despot. No wonder that the *ideal* Italian abominates the *Croat*.

[Pg 97]

The Dogana! So soon! 'Twas but a few miles on the other side of the Ticino that we passed through this ordeal. But perhaps the river, glorious as it looks, flowing from the democratic hills of the Swiss, may have infected us with political pravity; so here again we must undergo the search, and that not a mere *pro forma* one. The *diligence* vomits forth, at all its mouths, trunks, carpet-bags, and packages, encased, some in velvet, some in fir-deals, and some in brown paper. The multifarious heap was carried into the Dogana, and its various articles unroped, unlocked, and their contents scattered about. One might have thought that a great fair was about to begin, or that a great Industrial Exhibition was to be opened on the banks of the Ticino. The hunt was especially for books,—bad books, which England will perversely print, and Englishmen perversely read. My little stock was collected, bound together with a cord, and sent in to the chief douanier, who sat, Radamanthus-like, in an inner apartment, to judge books, papers, and persons. There is nothing there, thought I, to which even an Austrian official can take exception. Soon I was summoned to follow my little library. The man examined the collection volume by volume. At last he lighted on a number of the *Gazetta del Popolo*,—the same which I have already mentioned as given me by the editors in Turin. This, thought I, will prove the dead fly in my box of ointment. The sheet was opened and examined. "Have you," said the official, "any more?" I could reply with

[Pg 98]

a clear conscience that I had not. To my surprise, the paper was returned to me. He next took up my note-book. Now, said I to myself, this is a worse scrape than the other. What a blockhead I am not to have put the book into my pocket; for, except in extreme cases, the traveller's person is never searched. The man opened the thin volume, and found it inscribed with mysterious and strange characters. It was written in short-hand. He turned over the leaves; on every page the same unreadable signs met the eye. He held it by the top, and next by the bottom: it was equally inscrutable either way. He shut it, and examined its exterior, but there was nothing on the outside to afford a key to the mystic characters within. He then turned to me for an explanation of the suspicious little book. Affecting all the unconcern I could, I told him that it contained only a few commonplace jottings of my journey. He opened the book; took one other leisurely survey of it; then looked at me, and back again at the book; and, after a considerable pause, big with the fate of my book, he made me a bland bow, and handed me the volume. I was equally polite on my part, inly resolving, that henceforward Austrian douanier should not lay finger on my note-book.

The halt here was one of from two to three hours, which were spent in unlading the *diligence*, opening and locking trunks,—for in Austria nothing is done in a hurry, save the trial and execution of Mazzinists. But the long halt was nothing to me: I could not possibly lose time, and I could scarce be stopped at the wrong place; and certainly the bridge of the Ticino is the very spot one would select for such a halt, were the matter left in one's own choice. It commands the finest assemblage of grand objects, in a ride abounding in magnificent objects throughout. Having been pronounced, in passport phrase, "good to enter Austria,"—for my carpet-bag was clean, though doubtless my mind was foul with all sorts of notions which, in the latitude of Austria, are rankly heretical,—(and, by the way, of what use is it to search trunks, and leave breasts unexplored? Here is an imperfection in the system, which I wonder the Jesuits don't correct)—having, I say, had the Croat-guarded gates of Austria opened to me till I should find it convenient to enter, I retraced the few paces which divided the Dogana from the bridge, and stood above the rolling floods of the Ticino.

[Pg 99]

Refreshing it verily was to turn from the petty tyrannies of an Austrian custom-house, to the free, joyous, and glorious face of nature. Before me were the Alps, just shaking the cold night mists from their shaggy pine-clad sides, as might a lion the dew-drops from his mane. Here rose Monte Rosa in a robe of never-fading glory and beauty; and there stood Mont Blanc, with his diadem of dazzling snows. The giant had planted his feet deep amid rolling hills, covered with villages, and pine-forests, and rich pastures. Anywhere else these would have been mountains; but, dwarfed by the majestic form in whose presence they stood, they looked like small eminences, scattered gracefully at his base, as pebbles at the foot of some lofty pile. On his breast floated the fleecy clouds of morn, while his summit rose high above these clouds, and stood, in the calm of the firmament, a stupendous pile of ice and snow. Never had I seen the Alps to such advantage. The level plain ran quite up to them, and allowed the eye to take their full height from their flower-girt base to their icy summit. Hundreds and hundreds of peaks ran along the sky, conical, serrated, needle-shaped, jagged, some flaming like the ruby in the morning ray, others dazzlingly white as the alabaster.

[Pg 100]

As I bent over the parapet, gazing on the flood that rolled beneath, I could not help contrasting the bounty of nature with the oppression of man. Here had this river been flowing through the long centuries, dispensing its blessings without stop or grudge. Day and night, summer and winter, it had rolled gladsomely onwards, bringing verdure to the field, fruitage to the bough, and plenty to the peasant's cot. Now it laved the flower on its brink,—now it fed the umbrageous sycamore and the tall poplar on the plain,—and now it sent off a crystal streamlet to meander through corn-field and meadow-land. It exacted nothing of man for the blessings it so unweariedly dispensed. It gave all freely. Whether, said I to myself, does Italy owe most to its rivers or to its Governments? Its rivers give it corn and wine: its Governments give it chains and prisons. They load the patient Lombard with burdens that press him down into toil and poverty; or they lead him away to shed his blood and lay his bones in a foreign soil. Why is it that all the functions of nature are beneficent? Even the storms that rage around Mont Blanc, the ice of its eternal winter, yield only good. Here they come, a river of crystal water, decking with living green this far-spreading plain. But the institutions of man are not so. From their frozen summits have too oft, alas! descended, not the peaceful river, but the thundering avalanche, burying in irretrievable ruin, man, with his labours and hopes. I suspect, however, that this is a narrow as well as a sombre philosophy. Doubtless the great fact of the Fall is written on the face of life. Nevertheless, we have a strong belief that the mighty schemes of Providence, like the arrangements of external nature, will all in the end become dispensers of good; that those evil systems which have burdened the earth, like those mountains of ice and snow which rise on its surface, have their uses, though as yet we stand too near them, and too much within the sphere of their tempests and their avalanches, fully to comprehend these uses. We must descend into the low-lying plains of the future, and contemplate them afar off; and then the glaciers and tempests of these moral Mont Blancs may dissolve into tender showers and crystal rivers, which will fructify and gladden the world.

[Pg 101]

In a few minutes I must leave the bridge of the Ticino. Could I, when far away,—in the seclusion of my own library, for instance,—bid the Alps rise before me, in stupendous magnificence, as now? I turned round, and fixed my gaze on the tamer objects of the plain; then

back again to the mountains; but every time I did so, I felt the scene as new. Its glory burst on me as if seen for the first time. Alas! thought I, if this majestic image has so faded in the interval of a few moments, what will it be years after? A scene like this, it is true, can never be forgotten; but it is but a dwarfed picture that lives in the memory; and it is well, perhaps, it should be so; for were one to see always the Alps, with what eyes would one look upon the tamer though still romantic hills of his own country! And we may extend the principle. There are times when great truths—eternal verities—flash upon the soul in Alpine magnitude. It is a new world that discloses itself, and we are thrilled by its glory; but for the effective discharge of ordinary duties, it is better, perhaps, that these stupendous objects should be seen "as through a glass darkly," though still seen.

All too soon was the *diligence* ready to start. From the bridge of the Ticino the scenery was decidedly tamer. The Alps fell more into the background, and with their white peaks disappeared the chief glory of the scene. The plain was so level, and its woods of mulberry and walnut so luxuriant, that little could be seen save the broad road, with its white lines of curb-stones running on and on, and losing itself in the deep foliage of the plain. Its windings and turnings, though coming only at an interval of many miles, were a pleasant relief from the sameness of the journey. Occasionally side views of great fertility opened upon us. There were the small farms of the Lombard; and there was the tall Lombard himself, striding across his fields. If the farms were small, amends was made by the largeness of the farm-house. There was no great air of comfort about it, however. It wanted its little garden, and its over-arching vine-bough, which one sees in the happier cantons of Switzerland; and the furrowed and care-shaded face of the owner bespoke greater acquaintance with hard labour than with the dainties which the bounteous earth so freely yields. The Lombard plants, but another eats. We could see, too, how extensively and thoroughly irrigated was the plain. Numerous canals, brim-full of water, the gift of the Alps, traversed it in all directions; and by means of a system of sluices and aqueducts the surrounding fields could be flooded at pleasure. The plain enjoys thus the elements of a boundless fertility, and is the seat of an almost eternal summer.

Hic Ver perpetuum, atque alienis mensibus Æstas.

But the little towns we passed looked so very old and tottering, and the inhabitants, too, appeared as much oppressed with years or cares as the heavy dilapidated architecture amid which they dwelt, and out of which they crept as we passed by, that one's heart grew sad. How evident was it that the immortal spirit was withered, and that the land, despite its images of grandeur and sublimity, nourished a stricken race! The Alps were still young, but the men that lived within their shadow had grown very old. Their ears had too long been familiar with the clank of chains, and their hearts were too sad to catch up the utterances of freedom which came from their mountains. The human soul was dying, and will die, unless new fire from a celestial source descend to rekindle it. Architecture, music, new constitutions, the ever glorious face of nature itself, will not prevent the approaching death of the continental nations. There is but one book in the world that can do it,—the Book of Life. Unfold its pages, and a more blessed and glorious effulgence than that which lights up the Alps at sunrise will break upon the nations; but, alas! this cannot be so long as the Jesuit and the Croat are there. We saw, too, on our journey, other things that did not tend to put us into better spirits. As we approached Milan, we met a couple of gendarmes leading away a poor foot-sore revolutionist to the frontier. Ah! said I inly, could the Jesuits look into my breast, they would find there ideas more dangerous to their power, in all probability, than those that this man entertains; and yet, while he is expelled, I am admitted. No thanks to them, however. I rode onwards. League followed league of the richest but the most unvaried scenery. Campanile and hamlet came and went: still Milan came not. I strained my eyes in the direction in which I expected its roofs and towers to appear, but all to no purpose. At length there rose over the green woods that covered the plain, as if evoked by enchantment, a vision of surpassing beauty. I gazed entranced. The lovely creation before me was white as the Alpine snows, and shot up in a glorious cluster of towers, spires, and pinnacles, which flashed back the splendours of the mid-day sun. It looked as if it had sprung from under the chisel but yesterday. Indeed, one could hardly believe that human hands had fashioned so fair a structure. It was so delicate, and graceful, and aerial, and unsullied, that I thought of the city which burst upon the pilgrims when they had got over the river, or that which a prophet saw descending out of heaven. Milan, hid in rich woods, was before me, and this was its renowned Cathedral.

CHAPTER VIII.

CITY AND PEOPLE OF MILAN.

The Barrier—Beautiful Aspect of the City—Hotel Royale—History of Milan—Dreariness of its Streets—Decay of Art—Decay of Trade—The Cathedral—Beauty, not Sublimity, its Characteristic—Its Exterior described—The Piazza of the Cathedral—Austrian Cannon—Pamphlets on Purgatory—Punch—Punch *versus* the Priest—Church and State in Italy—Austrian Oppression—Confiscation of Estates in Lombardy—Forced Loans—Niebuhr's Idea that the Dark Ages are returning.

It was an hour past noon when the *diligence*, with its polyglot freight, drove up to the harrier. There gathered round the vehicle a white cloud of Austrian uniforms, and straightway every compartment of the carriage bristled with a forest of hands holding passports. These the men-at-arms received; and, making them hastily up into a bundle, and tying them with a piece of cord, they despatched them by a special messenger to the Prefect; so that hardly had we entered the Porta Vercellina, till our arrival was known at head-quarters. There was handed at the same time to each passenger a printed paper, in which the same notification was four times repeated,—first in Italian, next in French, then in German, and lastly in English,—enjoining the holder, under certain penalties, to present himself within a given number of hours at the Police Office.

[Pg 106]

It was under these conditions,—a pilgrim from a far land,—that I appeared at the gates of Milan. The passport detention seemed less an annoyance here than I had ever felt it before. The beauteous city, sitting so tranquilly amidst the sublimest scenery, seemed to have something of a celestial character about it. It looked so resplendent, partly by reason of the materials of which it is built, and partly by reason of the sun that shone upon it as an Italian sun only can shine, that none but pure men, I felt, might dwell here, and none but pure men might enter at its gates. There were white sentinels at its portals; rows of white houses formed its exterior; and in the middle of the city, floating above it,—for it seemed to float rather than to rest on foundations,—was its snow-white temple,—a place too holy almost, as it seemed, for human worship and human worshippers; and then the city had for battlements a glorious wall, white as alabaster, which rose to the clouds. Everything conspired to cheat the visitor into the belief that he had come at last to an abode where every hurtful passion was hushed, and where Peace had fixed her chosen seat.

"All right," shouted the passport official: the gendarmes, who guarded the path with naked bayonet, stepped aside; and the quick, sharp crack of the postilion's whip set the horses a-moving. We skirted the spacious esplanade, and saw in the distance the beauteous form of the Arco della Pace. We had not gone far till the drum's roll struck upon the ear, and a long glittering line of Austrian bayonets was seen moving across the esplanade. It was evident that the time had not yet come to Milan, all glorious as she seemed, when men "shall learn war no more." We plunged into a series of narrow streets, which open on the Mercato Vecchio. We crossed the Corso, and came out upon the broad promenade that traverses Milan from the square of the Duomo to the Porta Orientale. We soon found ourselves at the *diligence* office; and there, our little colony of various nations breaking up, I bade adieu to the good vehicle which had carried me from Turin, and took my way to the Hotel Royale, in the Contrada dei tre Re.

[Pg 107]

At the first summons of the porter's bell the gate opened. On entering, I found myself in what had been one of the palaces of Milan when the city was in its best days. But the Austrian eagle had scared the native princes and nobles of the Queen of Lombardy, who were gone, and had left their streets to be trodden by the Croat, and their palaces to be tenanted by the wayfarer. The buildings of the hotel formed a spacious quadrangle, three storeys high, with a finely paved court in the centre. I was conducted up stairs to my bed-room, which, though by no means large, and plainly furnished, presented the luxury of extreme cleanliness, with its beautifully polished wooden floor, and its delicately white napery and curtains. The saloon on the ground-floor opened sweetly into a little garden, with its fountain, its bit of rock-work, and its gods and nymphs of stone. The apartment had a peculiarly comfortable air at breakfast-time. The hissing urn, flanked by the tea-caddy; the rich brown coffee, the delicious butter, and the not less delicious bread, the produce of the plains around, not unnaturally white, as with us, but golden, like the wheat when it waves in the autumnal sun; and the guests, mostly English, which assembled morning after morning,—made the return of this hour very pleasant. Establishing myself at the Albergo Reale for this and the two following days, I sallied out, to wander everywhere and see everything.

Milan is of ancient days; and few cities have seen greater changes of fortune. In the reign of Diocletian and Maximilian it became the capital of the western empire, and was filled with the temples, baths, theatres, and other monuments which usually adorn royal cities. The tempest which Attila, in the middle of the fifth century, conducted across the Alps, fell upon it, and swept it away. Scarce a vestige of the Roman Milan has come down to our day. A second Milan was founded, but only to fall, in its turn, before the arms of Frederick Barbarossa. There was a strong vitality in its site, however; and a third Milan,—the Milan of the present day,—arose. This city is a huge collection of churches and barracks, cafés and convents, theatres and palaces, traversed by narrow streets, ranged mostly in concentric circles round its grand central building, the Duomo. The streets, however, that lead to its various ports, are spacious thoroughfares, adorned with noble and elegant mansions. Such is the arrangement of the town in which I now found myself.

[Pg 108]

I sought everywhere for the gay Milan,—the white-robed city I had seen an hour ago,—but it was gone; and in its room sat a silent and sullen town, with an air of most depressing loneliness about it. There were few persons on the streets; and these walked as if they dragged a chain at their heels. I passed through whole streets of a secondary character, without meeting a single individual, or hearing the sound of man or of living thing. It seemed as if Milan had proclaimed a fast and gone to church; but when I looked into the churches, I saw no one there save a solitary figure in white, in the distance, bowing and gesticulating with extraordinary fervour, in the presence of dumb pictures and dim tapers. How can a worship in which no one ever joins edify any one? I could discover no signs of a flourishing art. There were not a few pretty and some

beautiful things in the shop-windows; but the latter were all copies generally of the more striking natural objects in the neighbourhood, or of the works of art in the city, the productions of other times,—things which a dying genius might produce, but not such as a living genius, free to give scope to her invention, would delight to create. Such was the art of Milan,—the feeble and reflected gleam of a glory now set. As regards the trade of Milan,—a yet more important matter,—I could see almost no signs of it either. There were walking sticks, and such things, in considerable variety in the shops; but little of more importance. The fabrics of the loom, and the productions of the plane, the forge, and the printing press, which crowd our cities and dwellings, and give honest bread to our artizans, were all wanting in Milan. How its people contrived to get through the twenty-four hours, and where they got their bread, unless it fell from the clouds, I could not discover.

[Pg 109]

What an air of languor and weariness on the faces of the people! Amid these heavy-hearted and dull-eyed loiterers, what a relief it would have been to have met the soiled jacket, the brawny arm, and the manly brow, of one of our own artizans! I felt there were worse things in the world than hard work. Better it were to roll the stone of Sisyphus all life-long, than spend it in such idleness as weighs upon the cities of Italy. Better the clang of the forge than the rattle of the sabre. The Milanese seemed looking into the future; and a dismal future it is, if one may judge from their looks,—a future full of revolutions, to conduct, mayhap, to freedom; more probably to the scaffold.

I turned sharply round the corner of a street, and there, as if it had risen from the earth, was the Cathedral. As the sun breaking through a fog, or an Alpine peak flashing through mists, so burst this magnificent pile upon me; and its sudden revelation dispelled on the instant all my gloomy musings. I could only stand and gaze. Beauty, not sublimity, is the attribute of this pile. Beauty it rains around it in a never-ending, overflowing shower, as the sun does light, or Mont Blanc glory. I sought for some one presiding idea, simple and grand, which might take its place in the mind, and dwell there as an image of glory, never more to fade; but I could find no such idea. The pile is the slow creation of centuries, and the united conception of innumerable minds, which have clubbed their ideas, so to speak, to produce this Cathedral. Quarries of marble and millions of money have been expended upon it; and there is scarce an architect or sculptor of eminence who has flourished since the fourteenth century, who has not contributed to it some separate grace or glory; and now the Cathedral of Milan is perhaps the most numerous assemblage of beauties in stone which the world contains. Impossible it were to enumerate the elegances that cover it from top to bottom,—its carved portals, its flying buttresses, its arabesque pilasters, its richly mullioned windows, its basso-reliefs, its beautiful tracery, and its forest of snow-white pinnacles soaring in the sunlight, so calm and moveless, and yet so airy and light, that you fear the next breeze will scatter them. You can compare it only to some Alpine group, whose flashing peaks shoot up by hundreds around some snow-white central summit.

[Pg 110]

The building, too, is populous as a city. There are upwards of three thousand statues upon it, and places for a thousand more. Here stands a monk, busy with his beads,—there a mailed warrior,—there a mitred bishop,—there a pilgrim, staff in hand,—there a nun, gracefully veiled,—and yonder hundreds of seraphs perched upon the loftier pinnacles, and looking as if a white cloud of winged creatures from the sky had just lighted upon it.

[Pg 111]

I purposed to-morrow to climb to the roof, and thence survey the plains of Lombardy and the chain of the Alps; so, turning away from the door, I made the tour of the square in which the Cathedral stands. I came first upon a row of cannon, so pointed as to sweep the square. Behind the guns, piled on the pavement, were stacks of arms, and soldiers loitering beside them. Ah! thought I, these are the loving ties that bind the people of Lombardy to the House of Hapsburg. The priest's chant is heard all day long within that temple; and outside there blend with it the sentinel's tramp and the drum's roll. I passed on, and came next upon a most unusual display of literature. Four-paged pamphlets in hundreds lay piled upon stalls, or were ranged in rows against the wall. The subjects discussed in these pamphlets were of a high spiritual cast, and woodcuts were freely employed to aid the reader's apprehension. These latter belonged to a very different style of art from that conspicuous in the Cathedral, but they had the merit of great plainness; and a glance at the woodcut enabled one to read at once the story of the pamphlet. The wall was all a-blaze with flames; and I saw the advantage of an infallible Church to teach one secrets which the Bible does not reveal. The sin chiefly insisted on was that of despising the priest; and the punishment awaiting it was set before me in a way I could not possibly mistake. Here, for instance, was a wealthy sinner, who lay dying in a splendid mansion. With horrible impiety, the man had refused the wafer, and ordered the priest about his business, despite the imploring tears of wife and family, who surrounded his bed. A glance at the other compartment of the picture showed the consequence of this. There you found the man just launched into the other world. A crowd of black fiends, hideous to behold, had seized upon the poor soul, and were dragging it down into a weltering gulf of lurid flame. In another picture you had an equally graphic illustration of the happiness of obeying Mother Church. Here lay one dying amid beads, crucifixes, and shaven crowns. The devil was fleeing from the house in terror; and in the compartment devoted to the spiritual world, the soul was following a benevolent-looking gentleman, who carried a big key, and was walking in the direction of a very magnificent mansion on a high hill, where, I doubt not, a welcome and hospitable reception waited both. The same

[Pg 112]

lesson was repeated along the wall times without number.

Here was the doctrine of purgatory as incontestably proved as painted flames, and images of creatures with tails who tormented other creatures who had no tails, could prove it. If there was no purgatory, how could the painters of an infallible Church ever have given so exact a representation of it? And exact it must have been, else the priests would never have allowed these pictures to be hung up here, under their very eye. This was as much as to write "*cum privilegio*" underneath them. The whole scenery of purgatory was here most vividly depicted. There were fiends flying off with souls, or tossing them with pitchforks into the flames. There were boiling cauldrons, red-hot gridirons, cataracts of fire, and innumerable other modes of torment. A walk along this infernal gallery was enough, one would have thought, to make the boldest purgatory-despiser quail. But no one who has a little spare cash, and is willing to part with it, need fear either purgatory or the devil. In the large marble house in the centre of the square one might buy at a reasonable rate an excision of some thousands of years from his appointed sojourn in that gloomy region. And doubtless that was one reason for bringing this purgatorial gallery and the indulgence-market into such close proximity. It reminded the people of the latter inestimable blessing; and without some such salutary impulse the traffic in indulgences might flag.

[Pg 113]

I could not but remark, that the only person for whom these extraordinary representations appeared to have any attractions was myself. Not so the exhibition on the other side of the square. Having perused with no ordinary interest, though, I fear, with not much profit, this "Theory of a Future State," I crossed the quadrangle, passing right under the eastern towers of the Cathedral, and came suddenly upon a knot of persons gathered round a tall rectangular box, in which was enacting the melo-drama of Punch. These persons were enjoying the fun with a relish which was noways abated by the spectacle over the way. The whole thing was acted exactly as I had seen it before; but to me it was a novelty to hear Punch, and all the other interlocutors in the piece, discourse in the language in which Dante had sung, and in which I had heard, just before leaving Scotland, Gavazzi declaim. In all lands Punch is an astute scoundrel; but, strange to say, in all lands the popular feeling is on his side. His imperturbable coolness and truculent villainy procured him plaudits among the Milanese, as I had seen them do elsewhere. Courage and self-possession are valuable qualities, and for their sake we sometimes forgive bad men and bad causes; whereas, from nothing do we more instinctively recoil than from hypocrisy. On this principle it is, perhaps, that we have a sort of liking for Punch, incorrigible scoundrel as he is; and that great criminals, who rob and murder at the head of armies, we deify, while little ones we hang.

I had now completed my tour of the Cathedral, and could not help reflecting on the miscellaneous, and apparently incongruous, character of the spectacles grouped together in the square. In the middle was the great temple, in which priests, in stole and mitre, celebrated the high mysteries of their Church. In one of the angles were rows of mounted cannon, and a forest of bayonets. In another was seen the whole process of refining souls in purgatory. Strange, that if men here are shut up in prisons and hulks amid desperadoes, they come out more finished villains than they entered; whereas hereafter, if men are shut up with even worse characters, amid blazing fires, glowing gridirons, and cauldrons of boiling lead, they come out perfected in virtue. They pass at once from the society of fiends, where they have been whipped, roasted, and I know not what, to the society of angels. This is a strange schooling to give dignity to the character and conscious purity to the mind. And yet Rome subjects all her sons to this discipline for a longer or shorter period. Much do we marvel, that the same process which unfits men for associating with respectable people here should be the very thing to prepare them for good society hereafter. The other side of the square Punch had all to himself; and Punch, I saw, was the favourite. The inhabitants of Milan kept as respectable a distance from the painted fiends as if they had been veritable Satans, ready to clutch the incautious passer-by, and carry him off to their den. They kept the same respectable distance from the Austrian cannon; and these were no painted terrors. And as regards the Cathedral, scarce a solitary foot crossed its threshold, though there,—astounding prodigy!—He who made the worlds was Himself made many times every day by the priests. But Punch had a dense crowd of delighted spectators around him; and yet he competed with the priest at immense disadvantage. Punch played his part in a humble wooden shed, while the priest played his in a magnificent marble Cathedral, with a splendid wardrobe to boot. Still the people seemed to feel, that the only play in which there was any earnestness was that which was enacted in the wooden box. A stranger from India or China, who was not learned in either the religion or the drama of Europe, would probably have been unable to see any great difference between the two, and would have taken both for religious performances; concluding, perhaps, that that in the Cathedral was the established form, while that in the wooden box was the disestablished; in short, that Punch had been a priest at some former period of his life, and sung mass and sold indulgences; but that, imbibing some heterodox notions, or having fallen into some peccadillo, such as eating flesh on Friday, he had been unfrocked and driven out, and compelled to play the priest in a wooden tabernacle.

[Pg 114]

[Pg 115]

To return once more to the paintings and woodcuts illustrative of the punitive and purgative processes of purgatory, and which were in a style of art that demonstratively shows, that if Italy is advancing in the knowledge of a future life, she is retrograding in the arts of the present,—to

recur, I say, to these, there rested some doubt, to say the least of it, over their revelations of the world to come; but there rested no doubt whatever over their revelations of the present condition of Church and State in Italy. On this head the cannon and woodcuts told far more than the priests wished, or perhaps thought. They showed that both the State and the Church in that country are now reduced to their *ultima ratio*, brute force. The State has lost all hope of governing its subjects by giving them good laws, and inspiring them with loyalty; and the Church has long since abandoned the plan of producing obedience and love by presenting great truths to the mind. Both have found out a shorter and more compendious policy. The State, speaking through her cannon, says, "Obey me or die;" and the Church, speaking through purgatory, says, "Believe me or burn." There is one comfort in this, however,—the present system is obviously the last. When force gives way, all gives way. The Church will stand, doubtless, because they tell us she is founded on a rock; but what will become of the State? When men can be awed neither by painted fiends nor real cannon, what is to awe them? Indeed, we shrewdly suspect, that even now the fiends would count for little, were it not for the fiends incarnate, in the shape of Croats, by which the others are backed. The Lombards would boldly face the gridirons, cauldrons, and stinging creatures gathered in the one corner of the square at Milan, if they but knew how to muzzle the cannon which are assembled in the other.

[Pg 116]

In truth, things in this part of the world are not looking up. A universal serfdom and barbarism are slowly creeping over all men and all systems. The Government of Austria has become more revolutionary than the Revolution itself. By violating the rights of property, it has indorsed the worst doctrines of Socialism. That Government has, in a great number of instances, seized upon estates, without making out a title to them by any regular process of law. After the attempted outbreak at Milan in 1852, the landed property of well-nigh all the royalist emigrants was swept away by a decree of sequestration. The *Milan Gazette* published a list of seventy-two political refugees whose property has been laid under sequestration in the provinces of Milan, Como, Mantua, Lodi, Pavia, Brescia, Cremona, Bergamo, and Sondrio. In this list we find the names of many distinguished persons, such as Count Arese, the two Counts Borromeo, General Lechi, Duke Litta, Count Litta, Marquis Pallavicini, Marquis Rosales, Princess Belgioso. The pretext for seizing their estates was, that their owners had contributed to the revolutionary treasury; which was incredible to those who know the difference in feeling and views which separate the royalist emigrant nobles of Lombardy from the democratic republicans that follow Mazzini. In truth, the Government of Vienna needs their estates; and, imitating the example of the French Convention, and furnishing another precedent for Socialism when it shall come into power, it seized them without any colour of right or form of law. Another branch of the scourging tyranny of Austria is the system of forced loans. Some of the wealthiest families of Lombardy have been impoverished by these, and, of course, thrown into the ranks of the disaffected. The Austrian method of making slavery maintain itself is also peculiarly revolting. The hundred millions raised annually in Venetian Lombardy, instead of being spent in the service of these provinces, are devoted to the payment of the troops that keep down Hungary. The soldiers levied in Italy are sent into the German provinces; and those raised in Croatia are employed in keeping down Italy. Thus Italy holds the chain of Hungary, and Hungary, in her turn, that of Italy; and so insult is added to oppression.

[Pg 117]

The very roots of liberty are being dug out of the soil. The free towns have lost their rights; the provinces their independence; and the tendency of things is towards the formation of great centralized despotisms. Thus an Asiatic equality and barbarism is sinking down upon continental Europe. So much is this the case, that some of the thinking minds in Germany are in the belief that the dark ages are returning. The following passage in the "Life and Letters of Niebuhr," written less than two months before his death in 1831, is almost prophecy:—

[Pg 118]

"It is my firm conviction that we, particularly in Germany, are rapidly hastening towards barbarism; and it is not much better in France.

"That we are threatened with devastation such as that two hundred years ago, is, I am sorry to say, just as clear to me; and the end of the tale will be, *despotism enthroned amidst universal ruin. In fifty years, and probably much less, there will be no trace left of free institutions, or the freedom of the press, throughout all Europe, at least on the Continent.* Very few of the things which have happened since the revolution in Paris have surprised me."

The half of that period has scarce elapsed, and the prognostication of Niebuhr has been all but realized. At this hour, Piedmont excepted, there is *no trace left of free institutions, or the freedom of the press*, in Southern and Eastern Europe. Nor will these nations ever be able to lift themselves out of the gulph into which they have fallen. Revolution, Socialism, war, will only hasten the advent of a centralized despotism. We know of only one agency,—even Christianity,—which, by reviving the virtue and self-government of the individual, and the moral strength of nations, can recover their liberties. If Christianity can be diffused, well; if not, I do firmly believe with Niebuhr that, on the Continent at least, we shall have a return of "the dark ages," and "despotism enthroned amidst universal ruin."

[Pg 119]

CHAPTER IX.

ARCO DELLA PACE.

Depressing Effect produced by Sight of Slavery—The Castle of Milan—Non-intercourse of Italians and Austrians—Arco della Pace—Contrasted with the Duomo—Evening—Ambrose—Milanese Inquisition—The Two Symbols.

It was now drawing towards evening; and I must needs see the sun go down behind the Alps. There are no sights like those which nature has provided for us. What are embattled cities and aisled cathedrals to the eternal hills, with their thunder-clouds, and their rising and setting suns? Making my exit by the northern gate of the city, I soon forgot, in the presence of the majestic mountains, the narrow streets and clouded faces amid which I had been wandering. Their peaks seemed to look serenely down upon the despots and armies at their feet; and at sight of them, the burden I had carried all day fell off, and my mind mounted at once to its natural pitch. How crushing must be the endurance of slavery, if even the sight of it produces such prostration! Day by day it eats into the soul, weakening its spring, and lowering its tone, till at last the man becomes incapable of noble thoughts or worthy deeds; and then we condemn him because he lies down contentedly in his chains, or breaks them on the heads of his oppressors.

[Pg 120]

Emerging from the lanes of the city, I found myself on a spacious esplanade, enclosed on three of its sides by double rows of noble elms, and bounded on the remaining side by the cafés and wine-shops of the city, filled with a crowd of loquacious, if not gay, loiterers. In the middle of the esplanade rose the Castle of Milan,—a gloomy and majestic pile, of irregular form, but of great strength. It was on the top of this donjon that the beacon was to be kindled which was to call Lombardy to arms, in the projected insurrection of 1852. The soft green of the esplanade was pleasantly dotted by white groupes in the Austrian uniform, who loitered at the gates, or played games on the sward. But neither here nor in the cafés, nor anywhere else, did I ever see the slightest intercourse betwixt the soldiers and the populace. On the contrary, the two seemed on every occasion to avoid each other, as men, not only of different nations, but of different eras.

There are two monuments, and only two, in Italy, which redeem its modern architecture from the reproach of universal degeneracy. One of these is the Triumphal Arch of Milan, known also as the Arco della Pace. It was full in view from where I stood, rising on the northern edge of the esplanade, with the line of road stretching out from it, and running on and on towards the Alps, over which it climbs, forming the famous Simplon Pass. I crossed the plain in the direction of the Arco della Pace, to have a nearer inspection of it. It was more to my taste than the Duomo. The Cathedral, much as I admired it, had a bewildering and dissipating effect. It presented a perfect universe of towers, pinnacles, and statues, flashing in the Italian sun, and in the yet more dazzling splendour of its own beauty. But, stript of the tracery with which it is so profusely covered, and the countless statues that nestle in its niches, it would be a withered, naked, and unsightly thing, like a tree in winter. Not so the arch to which I was advancing. It rose before me in simple grandeur. It might be defaced,—it might grow old; but its beauty could not perish while its form remained. It presents but one simple and grand idea; and, seen once, it never can be forgotten. It takes its place as an image of beauty, to dwell in the mind for ever. To look upon it was to draw in concentration and strength.

[Pg 121]

I found this arch guarded by a Croat,—beauty in the keeping of barbarism. Much I wondered what sensations it could produce in such a mind: of course, I had no means of knowing. I touched the arch with my palm, to ascertain the quality of its polish and workmanship. The Croat made a threatening gesture, which I took as a hint not to repeat the action. I walked under it,—walked round it,—viewed it on all sides; but why should I describe what the engraver's art has made so familiar all over Europe? And such is the power of a simple and sublime idea,—whether the pen or the chisel has given it body,—to transmit itself, and retain its hold on the mind, that, though I had only now seen the Arco della Pace for the first time, I felt as if I had been familiar with it all my life; and so, doubtless, does my reader. The little squat figure, with the swarthy face, and dull, cold eye, that kept pacing beside it, watched me all the while my survey was going on. Sorely must it have puzzled him to discover the cause of the interest I took in it. Most probably he took me for a necromancer, whose simple word might transport the arch across the Alps.

The very spirit of peace pervaded the scene around the Arco della Pace. Peace descended from the summits of the Alps, and peace breathed upon me from the tops of the elms. It was sweet to see the gathering of the shadows upon the great plain; it was sweet to see the waggoner come slowly along the great Simplon road; it was sweet to see the husbandman unyoke his bullocks, and come wending his way homeward over the rich ploughed land, beneath the beautiful festoonings of the vine; sweet even were the city-stirs, as, mellowed by distance, they broke upon the ear; but sweeter than all was it to mark the sun's departure among the Alps. One might have fancied the mountains a wall of sapphire inclosing some terrestrial paradise,—some blessed clime, where hunger, and thirst, and pain, and sorrow, were unknown. Alas! if such were Lombardy, what meant the Croat beside me, and the black eagle blazoned on the flag, that I saw floating on the Castle of Milan? The sight of these symbols of foreign oppression recalled the haggard faces and toil-bent frames I had seen on my journey to Milan. I thought of the rich harvests which the sun of Lombardy ripens only that the Austrian may reap them, and the fertile

[Pg 122]

vines which the Lombard plants only that the Croat may gather them. I thought of the sixty thousand expatriated citizens whose lands the Government had confiscated, and of the victims that pined in the fortresses and dungeons of Lombardy; and I felt that truly this was no paradise. To me, who could demand my passport and re-cross the Alps whenever I pleased, these mountains were a superb sight; but what could the poor Lombard, whom Radetzky might order to prison or to execution on the instant, see in them, but the walls of a vast prison?

The light was fast fading, and I re-crossed the esplanade, on my way back to the city. High above its roofs, rose the spires and turrets of the Duomo, looking palely in the twilight, and reminding one of a cluster of Norwegian pines, covered with the snows of winter. As I slowly and musingly pursued my way, my mind went back to the better days of Milan. Here Ambrose had lived; and how oft, at even-tide, had his feet traversed this very plain, musing, the while, on the future prospects of the Church. Ah! little did he think, that what he believed to be the opening day was but a brief twilight, dividing the pagan darkness now past from the papal night then fast descending. But to the Churches of Lombardy it was longer light than to those of southern Italy. Ambrose went to the grave; but the spirit of the man who had closed the Cathedral gates in the face of the Goths of Justina, and exacted a public repentance of the Emperor Theodosius, lived after him. From him, doubtless, the Milanese caught that love of independence in spiritual matters which long afterwards so honourably distinguished them. They fought a hard battle with Rome for their religious freedom, but the battle proved a losing one. It was not, however, till towards the twelfth century, when every other Church in Christendom almost had acknowledged the claims of Rome, and an Innocent was about to mount the throne of the Vatican, that the complete subjugation of the Churches of Lombardy was effected. When the sixteenth century, like the breath of heaven, opened on the world, the Reformation began to take root in Lombardy. But, alas! the ancient spirit of the Milanese revived for but a moment, only to be crushed by the Inquisition. The arts by which this terrible tribunal was introduced into the duchy finely illustrate the policy of Rome, which knows so well how to temporize without relinquishing her claims. Philip II. proposed to establish this tribunal in Milan after the Spanish fashion; and Pope Pius IV. at first favoured his design. But finding that the Milanese were determined to resist, the pontiff espoused their cause, and told them, in effect, that it was not without reason that they dreaded the Spanish Inquisition. It was, he said, a harsh, cruel, inexorable Court—(he forgot that he had sanctioned it by a bull)—which condemned men without trial; but he had an Inquisition of his own, which never did any one any harm, and which his subjects in Rome were exceedingly fond of. This he would send to them. The Milanese were caught in the trap. In the hope of getting rid of the Spanish Inquisition, they accepted the Roman one, which proved equally fatal in the end. The degradation of Lombardy dates from that day. The Inquisition paved the way for Austrian domination. The familiars of the Holy Office were the avant couriers of the black eagles and Croats of the house of Hapsburg.

In the arch behind me, so simple withal, and yet so noble in its design, and whose beauty, dependent on no adventitious helps or meretricious ornaments, but inherent in itself, was seen and felt by all, I saw, I thought, a type of the Gospel; while the many-pinnacled and richly-fretted Cathedral before me seemed the representative of the Papacy. As stands this arch, in simple but eternal beauty, beside the inflated glories of the Duomo, so stands the gospel amid the spurious systems of the world. They, like the Cathedral, are elaborate and artificial piles. The stones of which they are built are absurd doctrines, burdensome rites, and meaningless ceremonies. In beautiful contrast to their complexity and inconsistency, the Gospel presents to the world one simple and grand idea. They perplex and weary their votaries, who lose themselves amid the tangled paths and intricate labyrinths with which they abound. The Gospel, on the other hand, offers a plain and straight path to the enquirer, which, once found, can never be lost. These systems grow old, and, having lived their day, return to the earth, out of which they arose. The Gospel never dies,—never grows old. Fixed on an immovable basis, it stands sublimely forth amid the lapse of ages and the decay of systems, charming all minds by its simplicity, and subduing all minds by its power. It says nothing of penances, nothing of pilgrimages, nothing of tradition, nor of works of supererogation, nor of efficacious sacraments dispensed by the hands of an apostolically descended clergy: its one simple and sublime announcement is, that *Eternal Life is the Free Gift of God through the Death of his Son.*

CHAPTER X.

THE DUOMO OF MILAN.

Interior Disappoints at First Sight—Expands into Magnificence—Description of Interior—Mummy of San Carlo Borromeo—His too early Canonization—A Priest at Mass—The Two Mysteries—Distinction between Religion and Worship—Roof of Cathedral—Aspect of Lombardy from thence—Ascend to the Top of Tower—Objects in the Square—Miniature of the World—The Alps from the Cathedral Roof—Martyr Associations—A Future Morning.

My next day was devoted to the Cathedral. Entering by the great western doorway,—a low-

browed arch, rich in carving and statuary,—I pushed aside the thick, heavy quilt that closes the entrance of all the Italian churches, and stood beneath the roof. My first feeling was one of disappointment; so great was the contrast betwixt the airy and sunlight beauty of the exterior, and the massive and sombre grandeur within. The marble of the floor was sorely fretted by the foot: its original colours of blue and red had passed into a dingy gray, chequered with the variously-tinted light which flowed in through the stained windows. The white walls and unadorned pillars looked cold and naked. Beggars were extending their caps towards you for an alms. On the floor rose a stack of rush-bottomed chairs, as high as a two-storey house,—as if the priests, dreading an eméute, had made preparations by throwing up a barricade. A carpenter, mounted on a tall ladder, was busied, with hammer and nails, suspending hangings of tapestry along the nave, in honour, I presume, of some saint whose fête-day was approaching. The dim light could but feebly illuminate the many-pillared, long-aisled building, and gave to the vast edifice something of a cavern look.

[Pg 127]

But by and by the eye got attempered; and then, like an autumnal haze clearing away from the face of the landscape, and revealing the glories of green meadow, golden field, and wooded mountain, the obscurity that wrapped pillar and aisle gradually brightened up, and the temple around me began to develope into the noblest proportions and the most impressive grandeur. Some hundred and fifty feet over head was suspended the stone roof; and one could not but admire the lightness and elegance of its groined vaultings, and the stately stature of the columns that supported it. Their feet planted on the marble floor, they stood, bearing up with unbowing strength, through the long centuries, the massive, stable, steadfast roof, from which the spirit of tranquillity and calm seemed to breathe upon you. On either hand three rows of colossal pillars ran off, forming a noble perspective of well nigh five hundred feet. They stretched away over transept and chancel, towards the great eastern window, which, like a sun glowing with rosy light, was seen rising behind the high altar, bearing on its ample disc the emblazoned symbols of the Book of the Apocalypse. The aisles were deep and shadowy; and through their forests of columns there broke on the sight glimpses of monumental tombs and altars ranged against the wall. I passed slowly along in front of these beautiful monuments, and read upon their marble the names of warriors and cardinals, some of whom still keep their place on the page of history. It took me some three hours to make the circuit of the Cathedral; but I shall not spend as many minutes in describing the works of art—some of them marvels of their kind—which passed under my eye; for my readers, I suspect, would not thank me for doing worse what the guide-books have done better. Below the great window in the apsis,—the same that contains what is one of the earliest of modern commentaries on the Book of Revelation,—the pavement was perforated by a number of small openings; and on looking down, I could see a subterranean chamber, with burning lamps. Its wall was adorned with pictures like the great temple above: and I could plainly hear the low chant of priests issuing from it. I had lighted, in short, upon a subterranean chapel; and here, in a shrine of gold and silver, lay embalmed the body of a former Archbishop of Milan—San Carlo Borromeo. Through the glass-lid of the coffin you could see the half-rotten corpse,—for the skill of the embalmer had been no match for the stealthy advances of decay,—tricked out in its gorgeous vestments, with the ring glittering on its finger, and the mitre pressing upon its fleshless skull. San Carlo Borromeo is the patron saint of Milan; and hence these perpetual lamps and ceaseless chantings at his tomb. The black withered face and naked skull grin horribly at the flaunting finery that surrounds him; and one almost expects to see him stretch out his skeleton hands, and tear it angrily in rags. The unusually short period of thirty years was all that intervened betwixt the death and the canonization of San Carlo; and his mother, who was alive at the time, though a very aged woman, had the peculiar satisfaction of seeing her son placed on the altars of Rome, and become an object of worship,—a happiness which, so far as we know, has not been enjoyed by mortal mother since the days of Juno and other ladies of her time. We do not envy San Carlo his honours; but we submit whether it was judicious to confer them just so soon. Before decreeing worship to one, would it not be better to let his contemporaries pass from the stage of time? Incongruous reminiscences are apt to mix themselves up with his worship. San Carlo had been like other children when young, we doubt not, and was none the worse of the castigation he received at times from the hand of her whose duty it now became to worship him. His mother little dreamt that it was an infant god she was chastising. "He was a pleasant companion," said a lady, when informed of the canonization of St Francis de Sales, "but he cheated horribly at cards." "When I was at Milan," says Addison, "I saw a book newly published, that was dedicated to the present head of the Borromean family, and entitled, *A Discourse on the Humility of Jesus Christ, and of St Charles Borromeo.*"

[Pg 128]

[Pg 129]

I came round, and stood in front of the high altar. It towers to a great height, looking like the tall mast of a ship; and, could any supposable influence throw the marble floor on which it rests into billows, it might ride safely on their tops, beneath the stone roof of the Cathedral. A priest was saying mass, and some half-dozen of persons on the wooden benches before the chancel were joining in the service. It was a cold affair; and the vastness of the building but tended to throw an air of insignificance over it. The languid faces of the priest and his diminutive congregation brought vividly to my recollection the crowd of animated countenances I had seen outside the same building, around Punch, the day before. The devotion before me was a dead, not a living thing. It had been dead before the foundations of this august temple were laid. But it loved to revisit "the glimpses" of these tapers, and to grimace and mutter amid these shadowy aisles. To nothing could I compare it but to the skeleton in the chapel beneath, that lay rotting in

[Pg 130]

a shroud of gorgeous robes. It was as much a corpse as that skeleton, and, like it too, it bore a shroud of purple and scarlet, and fine linen and gold, which concealed only in part its ghastliness. Were Ambrose to come back, he would once more close his Cathedral gates, but this time in the face of the priests.

"Without controversy," says the apostle, "great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." "Without controversy, great is the mystery of" iniquity. "God was manifest in the" mass. These are the two INCARNATIONS—the two MYSTERIES. They stand confronting one another. Romish writers style the mass emphatically "the mystery;" and as that dogma is a capital one in their system, it follows that their Church has *mystery* written on her forehead, as plainly as John saw it on that of the woman in the Apocalypse. But farther, what is the principle of the mass? Is it not that Christ is again offered in sacrifice, and that the pain he endures in being so propitiates God in your behalf? Is not, then, the area of Europe that is covered with masses "*the place where our Lord was crucified?*"

The stream can never rise higher than its source; and so is it with worship. That worship that cometh of man cannot, in the nature of things, rise higher than man. The worship of Rome is manifestly man-contrived. It may be expected, therefore, to rise to the level of his tastes, but not a hairbreadth higher. It may stimulate and delight his faculties, such as they are, but it cannot regenerate them. At the best, it is only the æsthetic faculties which the worship of Rome calls into exercise. It presents no truth to the mind, and cannot therefore act upon the moral powers. God is unseen: He is hidden in the dark shadow of the priest. How, then, can He be regarded with confidence or love? The doctrine of the atonement,—the central glory of the Christian system,—is unknown. It is eclipsed by the mass. If you want to be religious,—to obtain salvation,—you buy masses. You need not cultivate any moral quality. You need not even be grateful. You have paid the market-price of the salvation you carry home, and are debtor to no one.

[Pg 131]

Those who speak of the worship of the Church of Rome as well fitted to make men devout, only betray their complete ignorance of all that constitutes worship. Men must be devout before they can worship. There is no error in the world more common than that of putting worship for religion. Worship is not the cause, but the effect. Worship is simply the expression of an inward feeling, that feeling being religion; and nothing is more obvious, than that till this feeling be implanted, there can be no worship. The man may bow, or chant, or mutter; he cannot worship. He may be dazzled by fine pictures, but not melted into love or raised to hope by glorious truths. Moral feelings can be produced not otherwise than by the apprehension of moral truths; but in the Church of Rome all the great verities of revelation lie out of sight, being covered with the dense shadow of symbol and error. A single verse of Scripture would do more to awaken mind and produce devotion than all the statues and fine pictures of all the cathedrals in Italy.

I got weary at last of these shadowy aisles and the priests' monotonous chant; and so, paying a small fee, I had a low door in the south transept opened to me; and, groping my way up a stair of an hundred and fifty steps, or rather more, I came out upon the top of the Cathedral. I had left a noble temple, but only to be ushered into a far nobler,—its roof the blue vault, its floor the great Lombardy plain, and its walls the Alps and Apennines. The glory of the temple beneath was forgotten by reason of the greater glory of that into which I had entered. It was not yet noon, and the morning mists were not yet wholly dissipated. The Alps and the Apennines were imprisoned in a shroud of vapour. Nevertheless the scene was a noble one. Lombardy was level as the sea. I have seen as level and as circular an expanse from a ship's deck, when out of sight of land, but nowhere else. One of the most prominent features of the scene were the long straight rows of the Lombardy poplar, which, rooted in its native soil, and drinking its native waters, shoots up into the most goodly stature and the most graceful form. And then, there were glimpses of beautifully green meadows, and long silvery lines of canals; and all over the plain there peeped out from amidst rich woods, the white walls of hamlets and towns, and the tall, slender Campanile. The country towards the north was remarkably populous. From the gates of Milan to the skirts of the mists that veiled the Alps the plain was all a-gleam with white-walled villages, beautifully embowered. A fairer picture, or one more suggestive of peace and happiness, is perhaps nowhere to be seen. But, alas! past experience had taught me, that these dwellings, so lovely when seen from afar, would sink, on a near approach, into ill-furnished and filthy hovels, with inmates groaning under the double burden of ignorance and poverty.

[Pg 132]

When the more distant objects allowed me to attend to those at hand, I found that I was not alone on the Cathedral's roof. There were around me an assembly of some thousands. The only moving figure, it is true, was myself: the rest stood mute and motionless, each in his little house of stone; but so eloquent withal, in both look and gesture, that you half expected to find yourself addressed by some one in this life-like crowd of figures.

[Pg 133]

I ascended to the different levels by steps on the flying buttresses. A winding staircase in a turret of open tracery next carried me to the Octagon, where I found myself surrounded by a new zone of statues. Here I again made a long halt, admiring the landscape as seen under this new elevation, and doing my best to scrape acquaintance with my new companions. I now prepared for my final ascent. Entering the spire, I ascended its winding staircase, and came out at the foot of the pyramid that crowns the edifice. Higher I could not go. Here I stood at a height of about three hundred and fifty feet, looking down upon the city and the plain. I had left the grosser

forms of monks and bishops far beneath, and was surrounded—as became my aerial position—with winged cherubs, newly alighted, as it seemed, on the spires and turrets which shot up like a forest at my feet. Here I waited the coming of the Alps, with all the impatience with which an audience at the theatre waits the rising of the curtain.

Meanwhile, till it should please Monte Rosa and her long train of white-robed companions to emerge, I had the city spectacles to amuse me. There was Milan at my feet. I could count its every house, and trace the windings of its every street and lane, as easily as though it had been laid down upon a map. I could see innumerable black dots moving about in the streets,—mingling, crossing, gathering in little knots, then dissolving, and the constituent atoms falling into the stream, and floating away. Then there came a long white line with nodding plumes; and I could faintly hear the tramp of horses; and then there followed a mustering of men and a flashing of bayonets in the square below. I sat watching the manœuvres of the little army beneath for an hour or so, while drum and clarionet did their best to fill the square with music, and send up their thousand echoes to break and die amid the spires and statues of the Cathedral. At last the mimic war was ended, and I was left alone, with the silent and moveless, but ever acting statues around and below me. What a picture, thought I, of the pageantry of life, as viewed from a higher point than this world! Instead of an hour, take a thousand years, and how do the scenes shift! The golden spectacle of empire has moved westward from the banks of the Euphrates to those of the Tiber and the Thames. You can trace its track by the ruins it has left. The field has been illuminated this hour by the gleam of arts and empire, and buried in the darkness of barbarism the next. Man has been ever busy. He has builded cities, fought battles, set up thrones, constructed systems. There has been much toil and confusion, but, alas! little progress. Such would be the sigh which some superior being from some tranquil station on high would heave over the ceaseless struggle and change in the valley of the world. And yet, amid all its changes, great principles have been taking root, and a noble edifice has been emerging.

[Pg 134]

But, lo! the mists are rising, and yonder are the Alps. Now that the curtain is rent, one flashing peak bursts upon you after another. They come not in scores, but in hundreds. And now the whole chain, from the snowy dome of the Ortelles in the far-off Tyrol, to the beauteous pyramid of Monte Viso in the south-western sky, is before you in its noble sweep of many hundreds of miles, with thousands of snowy peaks, amid which, pre-eminent in glory, rises Monte Rosa. Turning to the south, you have the purple summits of the Apennines rising above the plain. Between this blue line in the south and that magnificent rampart of glaciers and peaks in the north, what a vast and dazzling picture of meadows, woods, rivers, cities, with the sun of Italy shining over all!

[Pg 135]

Ye glorious piles! well are ye termed everlasting. Kings and kingdoms pass away, but on you there passes not the shadow of change. Ye saw the foundations of Rome laid;—now ye look down upon its ruins. In comparison with yours, man's life dwindles to a moment. Like the flower at your foot, he blooms for an instant, and sinks into the tomb. Nay, what is a nation's duration, when weighed against thine? Even the forests that wave on your slopes will outlast empires. Proud piles, how do ye stamp with insignificance man's greatest labours! This glorious edifice on which I stand,—ages was it in building; myriads of hands helped to rear it; and yet, in comparison with your gigantic masses, what is it?—a mere speck. Already it is growing old;—ye are still young. The tempests of six thousand winters have not bowed you down. Your glory lightened the cradle of nations,—your shadows cover their tomb.

But to me the great charm of the Alps lay in the sacred character which they wore. They seemed to rise before me, a vast temple, crowned, as temple never was, with sapphire domes and pinnacles, in which a holy nation had worshipped when Europe lay prostrate before the Dagon of the Seven Hills. I could go back to a time when that plain, now covered, alas! with the putridities of superstition, was the scene of churches in which the gospel was preached, of homes in which the Bible was read, of happy death-beds, and blessed graves,—graves in which, in the sublime words of our catechism, "the bodies of the saints being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the Resurrection." Sleep on, ye blessed dead! This pile shall crumble into ruin; the Alps dissolve, Rome herself sink; but not a particle of your dust shall be lost. The reflection recalled vividly an incident of years gone by. I had sauntered at the evening hour into a retired country churchyard in Scotland. The sun, after a day of heavy rain, was setting in glory, and his rays were gilding the long wet grass above the graves, and tinting the hoar ruins of a cathedral that rose in the midst of them, when my eye accidentally fell upon the following lines, which I quote from memory, carved in plain characters upon one of the tombstones:—

[Pg 136]

The wise, the just, the pious, and the brave,
Live in their death, and flourish from the grave.
Grain hid in earth repays the peasant's care,
And evening suns but set to rise more fair.

There are no such epitaphs in the graveyards of Lombardy; nor could there be any such in that of Dunblane, but for the Reformation.

MILAN TO BRESCIA.

Biblioteca Ambrosiana—A Lamp in a Sepulchre—The Palimpsests—Labours of the Monks in the Cause of Knowledge—Cardinal Mai—He recovers many valuable Manuscripts of the Ancients which the Monks had Mutilated—Ulfula's Bible—The War against Knowledge—The Brazen Serpent at Sant' Ambrogio—Passport Office—Last Visit to the Duomo and the Arco Della Pace—The Alps apostrophized—Dinner at a Restaurant—Leave Milan—Procession of the Alps—Treviglio—The River Adda—The Postilion—Evening, with dreamy, decaying Borgos—Caravaggio—Supper at Chiari—Brescia—Arnold of Brescia.

THE morning of my last day in Milan was passed in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. This justly renowned library was founded in 1609 by Cardinal Borromeo, the cousin of that Borromeo whose mummy lies so gorgeously enshrined in the subterranean chapel of the Duomo. This prelate was at vast care and expense to bring together in this library the most precious manuscripts extant. For this purpose he sent learned men into every part of Europe, with instructions to buy whatever of value they might be fortunate enough to discover, and to copy such writings as their owners might be unwilling to part with. The Biblioteca Ambrosiana is worth a visit, were it only to see the first public library established in Europe. There were earlier libraries, and some not inconsiderable ones, but only in connection with cathedrals and colleges; and access to them was refused to all save to the members of these establishments. This, on the contrary, was opened to the public; and, with a liberality rare in those days, writing materials were freely supplied to all who frequented it. The library buildings form a quadrangle of massive masonry, with a grave, venerable look, becoming its name. The collection is upwards of 80,000 volumes; but, what is not very complimentary to the literary tastes of the prefetto and honorary canons of Sant' Ambrogio, the curators of the library, they are arranged, not according to their subjects, but according to their sizes. This library reminded me of a lamp in an Etrurian tomb. There was light enough in that hall to illuminate the whole duchy of the Milanese, could it but find an outlet. As it is, I fear a few straggling rays are all that are able to escape. There is no catalogue of the books, save some very imperfect lists; and I was told that there is a pontifical bull against making any such. I saw a few visitors in its halls, attracted, like myself, by its curiosities; but I saw no one who had come to restore volumes they had read, and receive others in their room. The modern inhabitant of Milan gives his days and nights to the café and the club,—not to the library. He lives and dies unpolluted by the printing press,—an execrable invention of the fifteenth century, from which a paternal Government and an infallible Church employ their utmost energies to shield him. The works of dead authors he dare not read; the productions of living ones he dare not print; and the only compositions to which he has access are the decrees of the Austrian police, and the Catechism of the Jesuit. He fully appreciates, of course, the care taken to preserve the purity of his political and religious faith, and will one day show the extent of his gratitude.

[Pg 138]

[Pg 139]

I saw in this library the famous *Palimpsests*. My readers know, of course, what these are. The *Palimpsests* are little books of vellum, from which an original and ancient writing has been erased, to make room for the productions of later ages and of other pens. These pages bore originally the thoughts of Virgil and Livy, and, in short, of almost all the great writers of pagan antiquity; but the monks, who did not relish their pagan notions, thought the vellum would be much better bestowed if filled with their own homilies. The good fathers conceived the project of enlightening and evangelizing the world by purging of its paganism all the vellum in Europe; and, being much intent on their object, they succeeded in it to an amazing extent.

"A second deluge learning did o'errun,
And the monks finished what the Goths begun."

Our readers have often seen with what rapidity a fog swallows up a landscape. They have marked, with a feeling of despair, golden peak and emerald valley sinking hopelessly in the dank drizzle. So the classics went down before the monks. The ancients were set a-trudging through the world in a monk's cowl and a friar's frock. On the same page from which Cicero had thundered, a monk now discoursed. Where Livy's pictured narrative had been, you found only a dull wearisome legend. Where the thunder of Homer's lyre or the sweet notes of Virgil's muse had resounded, you heard now a dismal croak or a lugubrious chant. Such was the strange metamorphosis which the ancients were compelled to endure at the hands of the monks; and such was the way in which they strove to earn the gratitude of succeeding ages by the benefits they conferred on learning.

It gives us pleasure to say that Cardinal Mai was amongst the most distinguished of those who undertook the task of setting free the imprisoned ancients,—of stripping them of the monk's hood and the friar's habit, and presenting them to the world in their own form. He laboured in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and succeeded in exhuming from darkness and dust the treasures which neglect and superstition had buried there. In the number of the works which the monks had palimpsested, and which Mai rescued from destruction, we may cite some fragments of Homer, with a great number of paintings equally ancient, and of which the subjects are taken from the works of this great poet; the unpublished writings of Cornelius Fronto; the unpublished letters of Antoninus Pius, of Marcus Aurelius, of Lucius Verus, and of Appian; some fragments of

[Pg 140]

discourses of Aurelius Symmachus; the Roman Antiquities of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, which were up to that time imperfect; unpublished fragments of Plautus, of Isæus, of Themistius; an unpublished work of the philosopher Porphyrius; some writings of the Jew Philo; the ancient interpreters of Virgil; two books of the Chronicles of Eusebius Pamphilus; the VI. and XIV. Sibylline Books; and the six books of the Republic of Cicero. I saw, too, in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, fragments of the version of the Bible made in the middle of the fourth century, by Ulfila, bishop of the Mæsogoths. The labours of the bishop underwent a strange dispersion. The gospels are at Upsala; the epistles were found at Wolfenbittel; while a portion of the Acts of the Apostles and of the Old Testament were extracted from the palimpsests. The original writing—the superincumbent rubbish being removed—looked out in a bold, well defined character, in as fresh a black, in some places, as when newly written; in others, in a dim, rusty colour, which a practised eye only could decipher. Thus the war against knowledge has gone on. The Caliph Omer burnt the Alexandrine library. Next came the little busy creatures the monks, who, mothlike, ate up the ancient manuscripts. Last of all appeared the Pope, with his Index Expurgatorius, to put under lock and key what the Caliph had spared, and the monks had not been able to devour. The torch, the sponge, the anathema, have been tried each in its turn. Still the light spreads.

[Pg 141]

I cannot enter on the other curious manuscripts which this library contains; nor have I anything to say of the numerous beautiful portraits and pictures with which its walls are adorned. The *Cenacolo*, or "Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci, in the refectory of the Dominican convent, is fast perishing. It has not yet "lost all its original brightness," and is mightier in its decay than most other pictures are in the bloom and vigour of their youth. I recollect the great Scottish painter Harvey saying to me, that he was more affected by "that ruin," than he was by all the other works of art which he saw in Italy. The grandeur of the central head has never been approached in any copy. One thing I regret,—I did not visit the Sant' Ambrogio, and so missed seeing the famous brazen serpent which is to hiss just before the world comes to an end. This serpent is the same that Moses made in the wilderness, and which Hezekiah afterwards brake in pieces: at least it would be heresy in Milan not to believe this. It must be comfortable to a busy age, which has so many things to think of without troubling itself about how or when the world is to end, to know that, if it must end, due warning will be given of that catastrophe. The vineyards of Lombardy are good, and monks, like other men, occasionally get thirsty; and it might spoil the good fathers' digestion were the brazen serpent of Sant' Ambrogio to hiss after dinner. But doubtless it will be discreet on this head. There is said to be in some one of the graveyards of Orkney, a tombstone on which an angel may be seen blowing a great trumpet with all his might, while the dead man below is made to say, "When I hear this, I will rise." The stone-trumpet will be heard to blow, we daresay, about the same time that the serpent of Sant' Ambrogio will be heard to hiss.

[Pg 142]

I was now to bid farewell to Milan, and turn my face towards the blue Adriatic. But one unpleasant preliminary must first be gone through. The police had opened the gates of Milan to admit me, and the same authorities must open them for my departure. I walked to the passport office, where the officials received me with great politeness, and bade me be seated while my passport was being got ready. This interesting process was only a few minutes in doing; and, on payment of the customary fee, was handed me "all right" for Venice, bating the innumerable intermediate inspections and *visés* by the way; for a passport, like a chronometer, must be continually compared with the meridian, and put right. I put my passport into my pocket; but on opening it afterwards, I got a surprise. Its pages were getting covered all over with little creatures with wings, and, as my fancy suggested, with stings,—the black eagles of Austria. How was I to carry in my pocket such a cage of imps? How was I to sleep at night in their company? Should they take it into their head to creep out of my book, and buzz round my bed, would it not give me unpleasant dreams? And yet part with them I could not. These black, impish creatures must be my pioneers to Venice.

I now made haste to take my last look of the several objects which had endeared themselves to me during my short stay. I felt towards them as friends,—long known and beloved friends; and never should I turn and look on the track of my past existence without seeing their forms of beauty, dim and indistinct, it might be, as the haze of lapsed time should gather over them; still, always visible,—never altogether blotted out. I walked round the Cathedral for the last time. There it stood,—beauty, like an eternal halo, sitting rainbow-like upon its towers and pinnacles. Its thousand statues and cherubs stood silent and entranced, tranquil as ever, all unmoved by the city's din, reminding one of dwellers in some region of deep and unbroken bliss. "Glorious pile!" said I, apostrophizing it, "I am but a pilgrim, a shadow; so are all who now look on thee,—shadows. But you will continue to delight the ages to come, as you have done those that are past." I had a run, too, to the *Piazza di Armi*, to see Beauty incarnate, if I may so express myself, in the form of the Arco della Pace. It is a gem, the brightest of its kind that earth contains. The faultless grace of its form is finely set off by the overwhelming Alpine masses in the distance, which seemed as if raised on purpose to defend it, and which rise, piled one above another, in furrowed, jagged, unchiselled, fearful sublimity.

[Pg 143]

I came round by the boulevard of the Porte Orientale, on my way back to the city. It is a noble promenade. Above are the boughs of the over-arching elms; on this hand are the city domes and

cathedral spires, with their sweet chimes continually falling on the ear; and on that are the suburban gardens, with the poplars and campaniles rising in stately grace beyond. The glorious perspective is terminated by the Alps. As the breezes from their flashing summits stirred the leaves overhead, they seemed to speak of liberty. I wonder the Croat don't impose silence on them. What right have they, by their glowing peaks, and their free play of light and shade, and their storms, and their far-darting lightnings, to stir the immortal aspirations in man's bosom? These white hills are great, unconquerable democrats. They will continually be singing hymns in praise of liberty. Yet why they should, I know not. Milan is deaf. Why preach liberty to men in chains? Surely the Alps,—the free and joyous Alps,—which scatter corn and wine from their horn of plenty so unweariedly, have no delight in tormenting the enslaved nations at their feet. Why do ye not, ye glorious mountains, put on sackcloth, and mourn with the mourning nations beneath you? How can ye look down on these dungeons, on these groaning victims, on the tears of so many widows and orphans, and yet wear these robes of beauty, and sing your song of gladness at sunrise? Or do ye descry from afar the coming of a better era? and is the glory that mantles your summits the kindling of an inward joy at the prospect of coming freedom? and are these whisperings of liberty the first utterances of that shout with which you will welcome the opening of the tomb and the rising of the nations?

[Pg 144]

The formidable process of loading the *diligence* was not yet completed. There was a perfect Mont Blanc of luggage to transfer from the courtyard to the top of the *diligence*, not in a hurry, but calmly and deliberately. The articles were to be selected one by one, and put upon the top, and taken down again, and laid in the courtyard, and put up a second time, and perhaps a third time; and after repeated attempts and failures, and a reasonable amount of vociferation and emphatic ejaculations on the part of postilions and commissionaires, the thing was to be declared completed, and finally roped down, and the great leathern cover drawn over all. Still the process would be got through before the hour of table d'hôte at the Albergo de Reale. I must needs therefore dine at a restaurant. I betook me to one of these establishments hard by the *diligence* office, and took my place at a small table, with its white napery, small bottle of wine, and roll of Lombardy bread, in the same room with some thirty or so of the merchants and citizens of Milan. I intimated my wish to dine *à la carte*; and instantly the waiter placed the tariff before me, with its list of dishes and prices. I selected what dishes I pleased, marking, at the same time, what I should have to pay for each. I dined well, having respect to the journey of two days and a night I was about to begin, and knowing, too, that an Italian *diligence* halts only at long intervals. The reckoning, I thought, could be no dubious or difficult matter. I knew the dishes I had eaten, and I saw the prices affixed, and I concluded that a simple arithmetical process would infallibly conduct me to the aggregate cost. But when my bill was handed me (a formality dispensed with in the case of those beside me), I found that my reckoning and that of "mine host" differed materially. The sum total on his showing was three times greater than on mine. I was curious to discover the source of this rather startling discrepancy in so small a sum. I went over again the list of eaten dishes, and once more went through the simple arithmetical process which gave the sum total of their cost, but with no difference in the result. It was plain that there was some mysterious quality in the arithmetic, or some nice distinctions in the cookery, which I had not taken into account, which disturbed my calculations. I became but the more anxious to have the riddle explained. In my perplexity I applied to the waiter, who referred me to his master. The day was hot; and boiling, stewing, and roasting, is hot work; and this may account for the passion into which my simple interrogatory put "mine host." "It was a just bill, and must be paid." I hinted that I did not impugn its justice, but simply craved some explanation about its items. Whereupon mine host, becoming cooler, condescended to inform me that I had not dined exactly according to the *carte*; that certain additions had been made to certain dishes; and that it did not become an Englishman to inquire farther into the matter. If not so satisfactory as might be wished, this defence was better than I had expected; so, paying my debts to Boniface, I departed, consoling myself with the reflection, that if I had three times more to pay than my neighbours, having fared neither better nor worse than they, I had, unlike these poor men, eaten my dinner without fetters on my hands.

[Pg 145]

[Pg 146]

This time the *banquette* of the *diligence*, with all its rich views, was bespoke, so I had to content myself with the *interieur*. It was roomy, however; there were but four of us, and its window admitted, I found, ample views of meadow and mountain. We drove to the station of the Venice railway, pleasantly situated amid orchards and extra-mural albergos. The horses were taken out, and the immense vehicle was lifted up,—wheels, baggage, passengers and all,—and put upon a truck. Away went the long line of carriages,—away went the *diligence*, standing up like a huge leathern castle upon its truck; while the engine whistled, snorted, screeched, groaned, and uttered all sorts of irreverent and every-day sounds, just as if the Alps had not been looking down upon it, and classic towns ever and anon starting up beside its path: a glorious vision of fresh meadows, bordered with little canals, brimful of water, and barred with the long shadows of campanile and sycamore,—for the sun was westering,—shot past us. The Alps came on with more slow and majestic pace. As peak after peak passed by, it seemed as if the whole community of hills had commenced a general march on Monte Viso, with all their crags, glaciers, and pine-forests. One might have thought that Sovran Blanc had summoned the nobles and high princes of his kingdom to meet him in his hall of audience, to debate some weighty point of Alpine government. An august assembly as ever graced monarch's court, in their robes of white and their cornets of eternal ice, would these tall and proud forms present.

[Pg 147]

Treviglio, beyond which the railway has not yet been opened, was reached in less than two hours. When near the town, the vast mirror of the blue Como, spread out amid the dark overhanging mountains, burst upon us. From it flowed forth the Adda, which we crossed. As its mighty stream, burning in the sunset, rolled along, it spangled with glory the green plain, as the milky-way the firmament. There is nothing in nature like these Alpine rivers. They fill their banks with such a wasteful prodigality of water, and they go on their way with a conscious might, as if they felt that behind them is an eternally exhaustless source. Let the sun smite them with his fiercest ray; they dread him not. Others may shrink and dry up under his beam: their fountains are the snows of a thousand winters.

On reaching the station, our *diligence*,—including passengers, and all that pertained to them,—was lifted from its truck and put on wheels, and once more stood ready to move, in virtue of its own inherent power, that is, so soon as the horses should be attached. This operation was performed in the calm eve, amid the glancing casements of the little town, on which the purple hills and the tall silent poplars looked complacently down.

Away we rumbled, the declining light still resting sweetly on the woods and hamlets. There are no postilions in the world, I believe, who can handle their whip like those of Italy. In very pride and joy our postilion cracked his whip, till the woods rang again. He took a peculiar delight in startling the echoes of the old villages, and the ears of the old villagers. Each report was like that of a twelve-pounder. This continual thunder, kept up above their heads, did not in the least affright the horses: they rather seemed proud of a master who could handle his whip in so workmanlike a fashion. He could so time the strokes as to make not much worse melody than that of some music-bells I have heard. He could play a tune on his whip.

[Pg 148]

We passed, as the evening thickened its shadows, several ancient *borgos*. Gray they were, and drowsy, as if the sleep of a century weighed them down. They seemed to love the quiet, dying light of eve; and as they drew its soft mantle around them, they appeared most willing to forget a world which had forgotten them. They had not always led so quiet a life. Their youth had been passed amid the bustle of commerce; their manhood amid the alarms and rude shocks of war; and now, in their old age, they bore plainly the marks of the many shrewd brushes they had had to sustain when young. The houses were tall and roomy, and their architecture of a most substantial kind; but they had come to know strange tenants, that is, those of them that *had* tenants, for not a few seemed empty. At the doors of others, dark withered faces looked out, as if wondering at the unusual din. I felt as if it were cruel to rouse these quiet slumber-loving towns, by dragging through their streets so noisy a vehicle as a *diligence*.

We passed Caravaggio, famous as the birthplace of the two great painters who have both taken their name from their city,—the Caravacchi. We passed, too, the little Mozonnica, that is, all of it which the calamities of the middle ages have left. Darkness then fell upon us,—if a firmament begemmed with large lustrous stars could be called dark. The night wore on, varied only by two events of moment. The first was supper, for which we halted at about eleven o'clock, in the town of Chiari. At eleven at night people should think of sleeping,—not of eating. Not so in Italy, where supper is still the meal of the day. An Italian *diligence* never breakfasts, unless a small cup of coffee, hurriedly snatched while the horses are being put to, can be called such. Sometimes it does not even dine; but it never omits to sup. The supper chamber in Chiari was most sumptuously laid out,—vermicelli soup, flesh, fowls, cheese, pastry, wine,—every viand, in short, that could tempt the appetite. But at midnight I refused to be tempted, though most of the other guests partook abundantly. I was much struck, on leaving the town, with the massive architecture of the houses, the strength of the gates, and other monuments of former greatness. Imagine Edinburgh grown old and half-ruined, and you have a picture of the towns of Italy, which was a land of elegant stone-built cities at a time when the capitals of northern Europe were little better than collections of wooden sheds half-buried in mire.

[Pg 149]

There followed a long ride. Sleep, benignant goddess, looked in upon us, and helped to shorten the way. What surprised me not a little was, how soundly my companions snoozed, considering how they had supped. The stages passed slowly and wearily. At length there came a long, a very long halt. I roused myself, and stepped out. I was in a spacious street, with the cold biting wind blowing through it. The horses were away; the postilions had disappeared; some of the passengers were perambulating the pavement, and the rest were fast asleep in the *diligence*, which stood on the causeway, like a stranded vessel on the beach. On consulting my watch, I found it was three in the morning, and in answer to my inquiries I was told that I was in Brescia,—a famous city; but I should have preferred to visit it at a more seasonable hour. "The best feelings," says the poet, "must have victual," and the most classic towns must have sleep; so Brescia, forgetful that famous geographers who lived well-nigh two thousand years ago had mentioned its name, and that famous poets had sung its streams, and that it still contains innumerable relics of its high antiquity, slept on much as a Scotch village would have done at the same hour.

[Pg 150]

Time is of no value on the south of the Alps. This long halt at this unseasonable hour was simply to set down an honest woman who had come with us from Milan. She was as big well-nigh as the *diligence* itself; but what caused all our trouble was, not herself, but her trunk. It lay at the bottom of an immense pile of baggage, which rose on the top of the vehicle; and before it could

be got at, every article had to be taken down, and put on the pavement. Of course, the baggage had to be put back, and the operation was gone through most deliberately and leisurely. A full hour and a half was consumed in the process; and the passengers, having no place to retire to, did their best to withstand the chill night air by a quick march on the street.

So, these silent midnight streets I was treading were those of Brescia,—Brescia, within whose walls had met the valour of the mountains and the arts of the plain. I was now treading where pagan temples had once stood, where Christian sanctuaries had next arisen, and where there had been disciples not a few when the light of the Reformation broke on northern Italy. I remembered, too, that this was the city of "Arnold of Brescia," one of the reformers before the Reformation. Arnold was a man of great learning, an intrepid champion of the Church's purity, and the founder of the "Arnoldists," who inherited the zeal and intrepidity of their master.

[Pg 151]

On the death of Innocent II., in the middle of the twelfth century, Arnold, finding Rome much agitated from the contests between the Pope and the Emperor, urged the Romans to throw off the yoke of a priest, and strike for their independence. The Romans lacked spirit to do so; and when, seven centuries afterwards, they came to make the attempt under Pius IX., they failed. Arnold was taken and crucified, his body reduced to ashes, and it was left to time, with its tragedies, to vindicate the wisdom of his advice, and avenge his blood; but to this hour no such opportunity of freeing themselves from thralldom as that which the Brescians then missed has presented itself.

"Time flows,—nor winds,
Nor stagnates, nor precipitates his course;
But many a benefit borne upon his breast
For human-kind sinks out of sight, is gone,
No one knows how; nor seldom is put forth
An angry arm that snatches good away,
Never perhaps to re-appear."

CHAPTER XII.

[Pg 152]

THE PRESENT THE IMAGE OF THE PAST.

Failure of the Reformation in Italy—Causes of this—Italian Martyrs—Their great Numbers—Consequences of rejecting the Reformation—The *Present* the Avenger of the *Past*—Extract from the *Siècle* to this Effect—An "Accepted Time" for Nations—Alternative offered to the several European Nations in the Sixteenth Century—According to their Choice then, so is their Position now—Protestant and Popish Nations contrasted.

OF the singular interest that attaches to Italy during the first days of the Reformation I need not speak. The efforts of the Italians to throw off the papal yoke were great, but unsuccessful. Why these efforts came to nought would form a difficult but instructive subject of inquiry. They failed, perhaps, partly from being made so near the centre of the Roman power,—partly from the want of union and comprehension in the plans of the Italian reformers,—partly by reason of the dependence of the petty princes of the country upon the Pope,—and partly because the great sovereigns of Europe, although not unwilling that the Papacy should be weakened in their own country, by no means wished its extinction in Italy. But though Italy did not reach the goal of religious freedom, the roll of her martyrs includes the names of statesmen, scholars, nobles, priests, and citizens of all ranks. From the Alps to Sicily there was not a province in which there were not adherents of the doctrines of the Reformation, nor a city of any note in which there was not a little church, nor a man of genius or learning who was not friendly to the movement. There was scarce a prison whose walls did not immure some disciple of the Lord Jesus; and scarce a public square which did not reflect the gloomy light of the martyr's pile. Much has been done, by mutilating the public records, to consign these events to oblivion, and the names of many of the martyrs have been irretrievably lost; still enough remains to show that the doctrines of the Reformation were then widely spread, and that the numbers who suffered for them in Italy were great. Need I mention the names of Milan, of Vicenza, of Verona, of Venice, of Padua, of Ferrara,—one of the brightest in this constellation,—of Bologna, of Florence, of Sienna, of Rome? Most of these cities are renowned in the classic annals; all of them shared in the wealth and independence which the commerce of the middle ages conferred on the Italian republics; all of them figure in the revival of letters in the fifteenth century; but they are encompassed by a holier and yet more unfading halo, as the spots where the Italian reformers lived,—where they preached the blessed truths of the Bible to their countrymen,—and where they sealed their testimony with their blood. "During the whole of this century," that is, the sixteenth, says Dr M'Crie, in his "Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy," "the prisons of the Inquisition in Italy, and particularly at Rome, were filled with victims, including persons of noble birth, male and female, men of letters, and mechanics. Multitudes were condemned to penance, to the galleys, or other arbitrary punishments; and from time to time individuals were put to death." "The following description," says the same historian, "of the state of matters in 1568 is from the pen of one who was residing at that time on the borders of Italy:—'At Rome some are

[Pg 153]

[Pg 154]

every day burnt, hanged, or beheaded. All the prisons and places of confinement are filled; and they are obliged to build new ones. That large city cannot furnish jails for the number of pious persons which are continually apprehended."

I had time to ruminate on these things as I paced to and fro in the empty midnight streets of Brescia. Methought I could hear, in the silent night, the cry of the martyrs whose ashes sleep in the plains around, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!" Yes; God has judged, and is avenging; and the doom takes the very form that the crime wore. An era of dungeons, and chains, and victims, has again come round to Italy; but this time it is "the men which dwell on the" papal "earth" that are suffering. When the Italians permitted Arnold, and thousands such as he, to be put to death, they were just opening the way for the wrath of the Papacy to reach themselves, which it has now done. Ah! little do those who gnash their teeth in the extremity of their torments, and curse the priests as the authors of these, reflect that their own and their fathers' wickedness, still unrepented of, has not less to do with their present miseries than the priestly tyranny which they so bitterly and justly execrate. In those ages these men were the *tools* of the priesthood; in this they are its *victims*. Thus it is that the Present, in papal Europe, and especially in Italy, rises stamped with the likeness of the Past. The *Siècle* of Paris, while the *Siècle* was yet free, brought out this fact admirably, when it reminded the champions of Popery that the horrors of the first French Revolution were not new things, but old, which the Jacobins inherited from the Papists; and went on to ask them "if they have forgotten that the Convention found all the laws of the Terror written upon the past? The Committee of Public Safety was first contrived for the benefit of the monarchy. Were not the commissions called revolutionary tribunals first used against the Protestants? The drums which Santerre beat round the scaffolds of royalists followed a practice first adopted to drown the psalms of the reformed pastors. Were not the fusilades first used at the bidding of the priests to crush heresy? Did not the law of the suspected compel Protestants to nourish soldiers in their houses, as a punishment for refusing to go to mass? Were not the houses burned down of those who frequented Protestant preaching? Were not the properties of the Protestant emigrants confiscated? Did not the Marshal Nouilles order a war against bankers? Was not the law of the maximum, which regulated prices, practised by the regency? Was not the law of requisition for the public roads practised to prepare the roads for Queen Marie Leczinska? It is true, many priests perished in the Terror, but they were men of terror perishing by terror,—men of the sword perishing by the sword."

[Pg 155]

I could not help feeling, too, when reflecting upon the state of Brescia, and of all the towns of Italy, and, indeed, of all the countries of Europe, that to nations, as well as individuals, there is "an accepted time" and a "day of salvation," which if they miss, they irremediably perish. If they enter not in when the door is open, it is in vain that they knock when it is shut. The same sentiment has been expressed by our great poet, in the well-known lines,—

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their lives is bound
In shallows and in miseries."

[Pg 156]

The sixteenth century started the European nations in a new career, and put it in the power of each to choose the principle of will or authority,—the compendious principle according to which both Church and State were governed under the Papacy, or that of law,—expressing not the will of one man, but the collective reason of the nation,—the distinctive principle of government under Protestantism. The century in question placed government by the canon law or government by the Bible side by side, and invited the nations of Europe to make their choice. The nations made their choice. Some ranged themselves on this side, some on that; and the sixteenth century saw them standing abreast, like competitors at the ancient Olympic games, ready, on the signal being given, to dart forward in the race for victory.

They did not stand abreast, be it observed. The several competitors in this high race did not start on equally advantageous terms. The rich and powerful nations declared for Popery and arbitrary government; the weak and third-rate ones, for Protestantism. On one side stood Spain, then at the head of Europe,—rich in arts, in military glory, in the genius and chivalry of its people, in the resources of its soil, and mistress, besides, of splendid colonies. By her side stood France,—the equal of Spain in art, in civilization, in military genius, and inferior only to her proud neighbour in the single article of colonies. Austria came next, and then Italy. Such were the illustrious names ranged on the one side. All of them were powerful, opulent, highly civilized; and some of them cherished the recollections of imperishable renown, which is a mighty power in itself. We have no such names to recount on the other side. Those nations which entered the lists against the others were but second and third-rate Powers: Britain, which scarce possessed a foot-breadth of territory beyond her own island,—Holland, a country torn from the waves,—the Netherlands and Prussia, neither of which were of much consideration. In every particular the Protestant nations were inferior to the Papal nations, save in the single article of their Protestantism: nevertheless, that one quality has been sufficient to counterbalance, and far more than counterbalance, all the advantages possessed by the others. Since the day we speak of, what a different career has been that of these nations! Three centuries have sufficed to reverse their position. Civilization, glory, extent of territory, and material wealth, have all passed over from the

[Pg 157]

one side to the other. Of the Protestant nations, Britain alone is more powerful than the whole of combined Europe in the sixteenth century.

But, what is remarkable also, we find the various nations of Europe at this hour on the same side on which they ranged themselves in the sixteenth century. Those that neglected the opportunity which that century brought them of adopting Protestantism and a free government are to this day despotic. France has submitted to three bloody revolutions, in the hope of recovering what she criminally missed in the sixteenth century; but her tears and her blood have been shed in vain. The course of Spain, and that of the Italian States, have been not unsimilar. They have plunged into revolutions in quest of liberty, but have found only a deeper despotism. They have dethroned kings, proclaimed new constitutions, brought statesmen and citizens by thousands to the block; they have agonized and bled; but they have been unable to reverse their fatal choice at the Reformation.

CHAPTER XIII.

[Pg 158]

SCENERY OF LAKE GARDA—PESCHIERA—VERONA.

Lake Garda—Memories of Trent—The Council of Trent fixed the Destiny as well as Creed of Rome—Questions for Infallibility—Why should Infallibility have to grope its Way?—Why does it reveal Truth piecemeal?—Why does it need Assessors?—The Immaculate Conception—Town of Desenzano—Magnificent Bullocks—Land of Virgil—Grandeur of Lake Garda—The Iron Peschiera—The Cypress Tree—Verona—Imposing Appearance of its Exterior—Richness and Beauty of surrounding Plains—Palmerston.

WHEN the morning broke we were skirting the base of the Tyrolese Alps. I could see masses of snow on some of the summits, from which a piercingly cold air came rushing down upon the plains. In a little the sun rose; and thankful we were for his warmth. Day was again abroad on the waters and the hills; and soon we forgot the night, with all its untoward occurrences. The face of the country was uneven; and we kept alternately winding and climbing among the spurs of the Alps. At length the magnificent expanse of Lake Garda, the Benacus of the ancients, opened before us. In breadth it was like an arm of the sea. There were one or two tall-masted ships on its waters; there were fine mountains on its northern shore; and on the east the conspicuous form of Monte Baldo leaned over it, as if looking at its own shadow in the lake. With the Lago di Garda came the memories of Trent; for at the distance of twenty miles or so from its northern shore is "the little town among the mountains," where the famous Council assembled, in which so many things were voted to be true which had been open questions till then, but to doubt which now were certain and eternal anathema.

[Pg 159]

The Reformation addressed to Rome the last call to reconsider her position, and change her course while yet it was possible. It said to her, in effect, Repent now: to-morrow it will be too late. Rome gave her reply when she summoned the Council of Trent. That Council crystallized, so to speak, the various doubtful opinions and dogmas which had been floating about in solution, and fixed the creed of Rome. It did more,—it fixed her doom. Amid these mountains she issued the fiat of her fate. When she published the proceedings of Trent to the world, she said, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; so help me—." To whom did she make her appeal? To the Emperor in the first place, when she prayed for the vengeance of the civil sword; and to the Prince of Darkness in the second, when she invoked damnation on all her opponents. Then her course was irrevocably fixed. She dare not now look behind her: to change a single iota were annihilation. She must go forward, amid accumulating errors, and absurdities, and blasphemies: amid opposing arts and sciences, and knowledge, she must go steadily onward,—onward to the precipice!

It is interesting to mark, as we can in history, first, the feeble germinations of a papal dogma; next, its waxing growth; and at last, after the lapse of centuries, its full development and maturity. It is easy to conceive how a mere human science should advance only by slow and gradual stages,—astronomy, for instance, or geology, or even the more practical science of mechanics. Their authors have no infallible gift of discerning truth from error. They must observe nature; they must compare facts; they must deduce conclusions; they must correct previous errors; and this is both a slow and a laborious process. But Infallibility is saved all this labour. It knows at once, and from the beginning, all that is true, and all that is erroneous. It does so, or it is not Infallibility. Why, then, was it not till the sixteenth century that Infallibility gave anything like a fixed and complete creed to the Church? Why did it permit so many men, in all preceding ages, to live in ignorance of so many things in which it could so easily have enlightened them? Why did it permit so many questions to be debated, which it could so easily have settled? Why did it not give that creed to the Church in the first century which it kept back till the sixteenth? Why does it deal out truth piecemeal,—one dogma in this century, another in the next, and so on? Why does it not tell us all at once? And why, even to this hour, has it not told us all, but reserved some very important questions for future decision, or revelation rather?

[Pg 160]

If it is replied that the Pope must first collect the suffrages of the Catholic bishops, this only

lands us in deeper perplexities. Why should the Pope need assessors and advisers? Can Infallibility not walk alone, that it uses crutches? Can an infallible man not know truth from error till first he has collected the votes of fallible bishops? Why should Infallibility seek help, which it cannot in the nature of things need?

If it is further replied, that this Infallibility is lodged betwixt the Pope and the Council, we are only confronted with greater difficulties. Is it when the decree has been voted by the Council that it becomes infallible? Then the Infallibility resides in the Council. Or is it when it is confirmed by the Pope that it becomes infallible? In that case the Infallibility is in the Pope. Or is it, as others maintain, only when the decree has been accepted by the Church that it is infallible, and does the Pope not know whether he ought to believe his own decree till he has heard the judgment of the Church? We had thought that Infallibility was one and indivisible; but it seems it may be parted in twain; nay, more, it may be broken down into an indefinite number of parts; and though no one of these parts taken separately is Infallibility, yet taken together they constitute Infallibility. In other words, the union of a number of finite quantities can make an infinite. Sound philosophy, truly!

[Pg 161]

If we go back, then, as the Ultramontanist will, to the dogma that the seat of Infallibility is the chair of Peter, the question returns, why cannot, or will not, the Pope determine in one age what he is able and willing to determine in another? The dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, for instance, if it is a truth now, was a truth in the first age, when it was not even dreamed of; it was a truth in the twelfth century, when it *was* dreamed of; it was a truth in the seventeenth century, when it gave rise to so many scandalous divisions and conflicts; and yet it was not till December 1854 that Infallibility pronounced it to be a truth, and so momentous a truth, that no one can be saved who doubts it. Will any Romanist kindly explain this to us? We can accept no excuses about the variety of opinion in the Church, or about the darkness of the age. No haze, no clouds, can dim an infallible eye. Infallibility should see in the dark as well as in the daylight; and an infallible teacher is bound to reveal all, as well as to know all.

And how happens it, too, that the Pope is infallible in only one science,—even the theological? In astronomy he has made some terrible blunders. In geography he has taken the earth to be a plain. In politics, in trade, and in all ordinary matters, he is daily falling into mistakes. He cannot tell how the wind may blow to-morrow. He cannot tell whether the dish before him may not have poison in it. And yet the man who is daily and hourly falling into mistakes on the most common subjects has only to pronounce dogmatically, and he pronounces infallibly. He has but to grasp the pen, with a hand, it may be, like Borgia's, fresh from the poisoned chalice or the stiletto, and straightway he indites lines as holy and pure as ever flowed from the pen of a Paul or a John!

[Pg 162]

The road now led down upon the lake, which lay gleaming like a sheet of silver beneath the morning sun. We entered the poor, faded, straggling town of Desenzano, where the usual motley assemblage of commissionaires, albergo-masters, dwarfs, beggars, and idlers of all kinds, waited to receive us. The poor old town crept close in to the strand, as if a draught of the crystal waters would make it young again. It reminded me of the company of halt, blind, and impotent folk which lay at the pool of Bethesda. So lay paralytic Desenzano by the shores of the Lake Garda. Alas! sunshine and storm pass across the scene, clothing the waters and the hills with alternate beauty and grandeur; but all changes come alike to the poor, tradeless, bookless, spiritless town. Whether summer comes in its beauty or winter in its storms, Desenzano is old, withered, dying Desenzano still. I hurried to an albergo, swallowed a cup of coffee, and rejoined the *diligence*.

Our course lay along the southern shore of the lake, over a fine rolling country, richly covered with vineyards, and where the rich red soil was being ploughed with bullocks. Such bullocks I had never before seen. The stateliest of their kind which graze the meadows of England and Scotland are but as grasshoppers in comparison. Truly, I saw before me the Anakims of the cattle tribe. To them the yoke was no burden. As they marched on with vast outspread horns, they could have dragged a hundred ploughs after them. They were not unworthy of Virgil's verse. And it gave additional charms to the region to think that Mantua, the poet's birthplace, lay not a long way to the south, and that, doubtless, the author of the *Bucolics* often visited in his youth this very spot, and walked by the margin of these waters, and marked the light and shade on these noble hills; or, turning to the rich agricultural country on the right, had seen exactly such bullocks as those I now saw, drawing exactly such ploughs, and making exactly such furrows in the red earth; and, spreading the beauty of his own mind over the picture, he had gone and imprinted it eternally on his page. The true poet is a real clairvoyant. He may not give you the shape, or colour, or size of objects; he may not tell how tall the mountains, or how long the hedge-rows, or how broad the fields; but by some wonderful art he can convey to your mind what is present to his own. On this principle it was, perhaps, that the landscape, with all its scenery, was familiar to me. I had seen it long years before. These were the very fields, the very bullocks, the very ploughs, the very swains, my imagination had painted in my schoolboy days, when I sat with the page of the great pastoral poet of Italy open before me,—too frequently, alas! only open. On these shores, too, had dwelt the poet Catullus; and a doubtful ruin which the traveller sees on the point of the long sharp promontory of Sermio, which runs up into the lake from the south, still bears the name of Catullus' Villa. If these are the ruins of Catullus' house, which is very questionable, he must have lived in a style of magnificence which has fallen to the lot of but few poets.

[Pg 163]

[Pg 164]

The complexion of a day or of a lifetime may hang upon the commonest occurrence. A shoe here dropped from the foot of one of the horses; and the postilion, diving into the recesses of the *diligence*, and drawing forth a box with the requisite tools, began forthwith, on the highway, the process of shoeing. I stepped out, and walked on before, thankful for the incident, which had given me the opportunity of a saunter along the road. You can *see* nature from the windows of your carriage, but you can *converse* with her only by a quiet stroll amidst her scenes. On the right were the great plains which the Po waters, finely mottled with meadow and corn-field, besprint with chestnut trees, mulberries, and laurels, and fringed, close by the highway, with rolling heights, on which grew the vine. On the left was the far expanding lake, with its bays and creeks, and the shadows of its stately hills mirrored on its surface. It looked as if some invisible performer was busy shifting the scenes for the traveller's delight, and spreading a different prospect before his eye at every few yards. New bays were continually opening, and new peaks rising on the horizon. "It was so rough with tempests when we passed by it," says Addison, "that it brought into my mind Virgil's description of it."

"Here, vexed by winter storms, *Benacus* raves,
Confused with working sands and rolling waves;
Rough and tumultuous, like a sea it lies;
So loud the tempest roars, so high the billows rise."

I saw it in more peaceful mood. Cool and healthful breezes were blowing from the Tyrol; and the salubrious character of the region was amply attested by the robust forms of the inhabitants. I have seldom seen a finer race of men and women than the peasants adjoining the Lake Garda. They were all of goodly stature, and singularly graceful and noble in their gait. [Pg 165]

In a few hours we approached the strong fortress of Peschiera. We passed through several concentric lines of fortifications, walls, moats, drawbridges, and sloping earthen embankments, in which cart-loads of balls, impelled with all the force which powder can give, would sink and be lost. In the very heart of these grim ramparts, like a Swiss hamlet amid its mountain ranges, or a jewel in its iron-bound casket, lay the little town of Peschiera, sleeping quietly beside the blue and full-flooded Mincio, Virgil's own river:—

"Where the slow Mincius through the valley strays;
Where cooling streams invite the flocks to drink,
And reeds defend the winding water's brink."

It issues from the lake, and, flowing underneath the ramparts, freshens a spot which otherwise wears sufficiently the grim iron-visaged features of war. Nothing can surpass the grandeur of Lake Garda, which here almost touches the walls of the fortress. It lies outspread like the sea, and runs far up to where the snow-clad summits of the Tyrol prop the northern horizon.

Leaving behind us the iron Peschiera and the blue Garda, we held on our way over an open, breezy country, where the stony and broken scenery of the mountains began to mingle with the rich cultivation of the plains. It reminded me of the line where the lowlands of Perthshire join its highlands. Here the cypress tree met me for the first time. The familiar form of the poplar,—now too familiar to give pleasure,—disappeared, and in its room came the less stately but more graceful and beautiful form of the cypress. The cypress is silence personified. It stands wrapt in its own thoughts. One can hardly see it without asking, "What ails thee? Is it for the past you mourn?" Yet, pensive as it looks, its unconscious grace fills the landscape with beauty. [Pg 166]

Verona, gilded by the beams of Shakspeare's mighty genius, and by the yet purer glory of the martyrs of the Reformation, was in sight miles before we reached it. It reposes on the long gentle slope of a low hill, with plenty of air and sunlight. The rich plains at its feet, which stretch away to the south, look up to the old town with evident affection and pride, and strive to cheer it by pouring wheat, and wine, and fruits into its markets. Its appearance at a distance is imposing, from its numerous towers, and the long sweep of its forked battlements, which seem to encircle the whole acclivity on which the town stands, leaving as much empty space within their lines as might contain half-a-dozen Veronas. Its environs are enchanting. Behind it, and partly encircling it on the east, are an innumerable array of low hills, of the true Italian shape and colour. These were all a-gleam with white villas; and as they sparkled in the sunlight, relieved against the deep azure of the mountains, they showed like white sails on the blue sea, or stars in the dark sky. At its gates we were met, of course, by the Austrian gendarmerie. To have the affair of the passport finished and over as quickly as possible, I unfolded the sheet, and carelessly hung it over the window of the carriage. The corner of the paper, which bore, in tall, bold characters, the name of her Majesty's Foreign Secretary, caught the eye of a passenger. "PALMERSTON!" "PALMERSTON!" he shouted aloud. Instantly there was a general rush at the document; and fearing that it should be torn in pieces, which would have been an awkward affair for me, seeing without it it would be impossible to get forward, and nearly as impossible to get back, I surrendered it to the first speaker, that it might be passed round, and all might gratify their curiosity or idolatry with the sight of a name which abroad is but a synonym for "England." After making the tour of the *diligence*, the passport was handed out to the gendarme, who, feeling no such intense desire as did the passengers to see the famous characters, had waited good-naturedly all the while. The man surveyed with grim complacency a name which was then in no pleasant odour with the statesmen and functionaries of Austria. In return he gave me a paper containing "permission to [Pg 167]

sojourn for a few hours in Verona," with its co-relative "permission to depart." I felt proud of my country, which could as effectually protect me at the gates of Verona as on the shores of the Forth.

CHAPTER XIV.

[Pg 168]

FROM VERONA TO VENICE.

Interior of Verona—End of World seemingly near in Italy—The Monks and the Classics—A Cast-Iron Revolutionist—A Beautiful Glimpse—Railway Carriages—Railway Company—Tyrolese Alps—Dante's Patmos—Vicenza—Padua—The Lagunes—The Omnibus or Gondola—Silence of City—Sail through the Canals—Charon and his Boat—Piazza of Saint Mark.

THE gates of Verona opened, and the enchantment was gone. He who would carry away the idea of a magnificent city, which the exterior of Verona suggests, must go round it, not through it. The first step within its walls is like the stroke of an enchanter's wand. The villa-begemmed city, with its ramparts and its cypress-trees, takes flight, and there rises before the traveller an old ruinous town, with dirty streets and a ragged and lazy population. It reminds one of what he meets in tales of eastern romance, where young and beautiful princesses are all at once transformed by malignant genies into old and withered hags.

In truth, on entering an Italian town one feels as if the last trumpet were about to sound. The world, and all that is in it, seems old—very old. Man is old, his dwellings are old, his works are old, and the very earth seems old. All seems to betoken that it is the last age, and that the world is winding up its business, preparatory to the final closing of the drama. Commerce, the arts, empire,—all have taken their departure, and have left behind only the vestiges of their former presence. The Italians, living in a land which is but a sort of sepulchre, look as if they had voted that the world cannot outlast the present century, and that it is but a waste of labour to rebuild anything or repair anything. Accordingly, all is allowed to go to decay,—roads, bridges, castles, palaces; and the only thing which is in any degree cared for are their churches. Why make provision for posterity, when there is to be none? Why erect new houses, when those already built will last their time and the world's? Why repair their mouldering dwellings, or renew the falling fences of their fields, or replace their dying olives with young trees, or even patch their own ragged garments? The crack of doom will soon be upon them, and all will perish in the great conflagration. They account it the part of wisdom, then, to pass the interval in the least fatiguing and most agreeable manner possible. They sip their coffee, and take their stroll, and watch the shadows as they fall eastward from their purple hills. Why should they incur the toil of labouring or thinking in a world that is soon to pass away, and which is as good as ended already?

[Pg 169]

Of Verona I can say but little. My stay there, which was not much over the hour, afforded me no opportunity for observation. Its famous Amphitheatre, coeval with the great Coliseum at Rome, and the best preserved Roman Amphitheatre in the world, I had not time to visit. Its numerous churches, with their frescoes and paintings, I less regret not having seen. Its *Biblioteca Capitolare*, which is said to be an unwrought quarry of historic and patristic lore, I should have liked to visit. There, too, the monks of the middle ages were caught tripping. "Sophocles or Tacitus," in the words of Gibbon, "had been compelled to resign the parchment to missals, homilies, and the golden legend." The "Institutes of Caius," which were the foundation of the Institutes of Justinian, were discovered in this library palimpsested. A rumour had been spread that the author of the Pandects had reduced the "Institutes of Caius" to ashes, that posterity might not discover the source of his own great work. Gibbon ventured to contradict the scandal, and to point to the monks as the probable devastators. His sagacity was justified when Niebuhr discovered in the Biblioteca Capitolare of Verona these very Institutes beneath the homilies of St. Jerome. Verona yet retains one grand feature untouched by decay or time,—the river Adige,—which, passing underneath the walls, dashes through the city in a magnificent torrent, spanned by several noble bridges of ancient architecture, and turns in its course several large floating mills, which are anchored across the stream. The market-place, a large square, was profusely covered with the produce of the neighbouring plains. I purchased a roll of bread and a magnificent cluster of grapes, and lunched in fine style.

[Pg 170]

At Verona the railway resumes, and runs all the way to Venice. What a transition from the *diligence*—the lumbering, snail-paced *diligence*—to the rail. It is like passing by a single leap from the dark ages to modern times. Then only do you feel what you owe to Watt. In my humble opinion, the Pope should have put the steam-engine into the Index Expurgatorius. His priests in France have attended at the opening of railways, and blessed the engines. What! bless the steam-engine! Sprinkle holy water on the heads of Mazzini and Gavazzi. For what are these engines, but so many cast-iron Mazzinis and Gavazzis. The Pope should have anathematized the steam-engine. He should have cursed it after the approved pontifical fashion, in standing and in running, in watering and in coaling. He should have cursed it in the whole structure of its machinery,—in its funnel, in its boiler, in its piston, in its cranks, and in its stopcocks. I can see a hundred things which are sure to be crushed beneath its ponderous wheels. I can see it tearing ruthlessly

[Pg 171]

onwards, and dashing through prejudices, opinions, usages, and time-honoured and venerated institutions, and sweeping all away like so many cobwebs. Was the Argus of the Vatican asleep when this wolf broke into the fold? But *in* he is, and the Pope's bulls will have enough to do to drive him out. But more of this anon.

The station of the railway is on the east of the town, in a spot of enchanting loveliness. It was the first and almost the only spot that realized the Italy of my dreams. It was in a style of beauty such as I had not before seen, and was perfect in its kind. The low lovely hills were ranged in crescent form, and were as faultless as if Grace herself had moulded them on her lathe. Their clothing was a deep rich purple. White villas, like pearls, sparkled upon them; and they were dotted with the cypress, which stood on their sides in silent, meditative, ethereal grace. The scene possessed not the sublime grandeur of Switzerland, nor the rugged picturesqueness of Scotland: its characteristic was the finished, spiritualized, voluptuous beauty of Italy. But hark! the railway-bell rings out its summons.

The carriages on the Verona and Venice Railway are not those strong-looking, crib-like machines which we have in England, and which seem built, as our jails and bridewells are, in anticipation that the inmates will do their best to get out. They are roomy and elegant saloons (though strong in their build), of about forty feet in length, and may contain two hundred passengers a-piece. They are fitted up with a tier of cushioned seats running round the carriage, and two sofa-seats running lengthways in the middle. At each end is a door by which the guard enters and departs, and passes along the whole train, as if it were a suit of apartments. So far as I could make out, I was the only *Englese* in the carriage, which was completely filled with the citizens and peasantry of the towns and rural districts which lay on our route,—the mountaineer of the Tyrol, the native of the plain, the inhabitant of the city of Verona, of Vicenza, of Venice. There was a greater amount of talk, and of vehement and eloquent gesture, than would have been seen in the same circumstances in England. The costume was varied and picturesque, and so too, but in a less degree, the countenance. There were in the carriage tall athletic forms, reared amid the breezes and vines of the Tyrol; and there were noble faces,—faces with rich complexions, and dark fiery eyes, which could gleam in love or burn in battle, and which bore the still farther appendage of moustache and beard, in which the wearer evidently took no little pride, and on which he bestowed no little pains. The company had somewhat the air of a masquerade. There was the Umbrian cloak, the cone-shaped beaver, the vest with its party-coloured lacings. There were the long loose robe and low-crowned hat of the priest, with its enormous brim, as if to shade the workings of his face beneath. There was the brown cloak of the friar; and there were hats and coats of the ordinary Frank fashion. The Leghorn bonnet is there unknown, as almost all over the Continent, unless among the young girls of Switzerland; and the head-gear of the women mostly was a plain cotton napkin, folded on the brow and pinned below the chin,—a custom positively ugly, which may become a mummy or a shaven head, but not for those who have ringlets to show. Some with better taste had discarded the napkin, and wore a smart cap. On the persons of not a few of the females was displayed a considerable amount of value, in the shape of gold chains, rings, and jewellery. This is an indication, not of wealth, but of poverty and stagnant trade. It was a custom much in use among oriental ladies before banks were established.

The plains eastward of Verona on the right were amazingly rich, and the uplands and heights on the left were crowned with fine castles and beautiful little temples. Yet the beauty and richness of the region could not soothe Dante for his lost Florence. For here was his "Patmos," if we may venture on imagery borrowed from the history of a greater seer; and here the visions of the Purgatorio had passed before his eye. After a few hours' riding, the fine hills of the Tyrolese Alps came quite up to us, disclosing, as they filed past, a continuous succession of charming views. When the twilight began to gather, and they stood in their rich drapery of purple shadows, their beauty became a thing indescribable. We saw Vicenza, where, of all the spots in Italy, the Reformation found the largest number of adherents, and where Palladio arose in the sixteenth century, to arrest for a while, by his genius, the decay of the architectural arts in Italy. We saw, too, the gray Padua looking at us through the sombre shadows of its own and the day's decline. We continued our course over the flat but rich country beyond; and as night fell we reached the edge of the Lagoon.

I looked out into the watery waste with the aid of the faint light, but I could see no city, and nothing whereon a city could stand. All was sea; and it seemed idle to seek a city, or any habitation of man, in the midst of these waters. But the engine with its great red eye could see farther into the dark; and it dashed fearlessly forward, and entered on the long bridge which I saw stretching on and away over the flood, till its farther end, like that of the bridge which Mirza saw in vision, was lost in a cloud. I could see, as we rode on, on the bosom of the flood beneath us, twinkling lights, which were probably lighthouses, and black dots, which we took for boats. After a five miles' run through scenery of this novel character, the train stopped, and we found that we had arrived, not in a cloud or in a quicksand, as there seemed some reason to fear, but in a spacious and elegant station, brilliantly lighted with gas, and reminding one, from its sudden apparition and its strange site, of the fabled palace of the Sicilian Fairy Queen, only not built, like hers, of sunshine and sea-mist. We were marched in file past, first the tribunal of the searchers, and next the tribunal of the passport officials; and then an Austrian gendarme opening to each,

[Pg 172]

[Pg 173]

[Pg 174]

as he passed this ordeal, the door of the station-house, I stepped out, to have my first sight, as I hoped, of the Queen of the Adriatic.

I found myself in the midst of the sea, standing on a little platform of land, with a cloudy mass floating before me, resembling, in the uncertain light, the towers and domes of a spectral city. It was now for the first time that I realized the peculiar position of Venice. I had often read of the city whose streets were canals and whose chariots were gondolas; but I had failed to lay hold of it as a reality, and had unconsciously placed Venice in the region of fable. There was no missing the fact now. I was hemmed in on all sides by the ocean, and could not move a step without the certainty of being drowned. What was I to do? In answer to my inquiries, I was told that I must proceed to my hotel in an omnibus. This sounded of the earth, and I looked eagerly round to see the desired vehicle; but horses, carriage, wheels, I could see none. I could no more conceive of an omnibus that could swim on the sea, than the Venetians could of a gondola that could move on the dry land. I was shown a large gondola, to which the name of omnibus was given, which lay at the bottom of the stairs waiting for passengers. I descended into it, and was followed by some thirty more. We were men of various nations and various tongues, and we took our seats in silence. We pushed off, and were soon gliding along on the Grand Canal. Not a word was spoken. Although we had been a storming party sent to surprise an enemy's fort by night, we could not have conducted our proceedings in profounder quiet. There reigned as unbroken a stillness around us, as if, instead of the midst of a city, we had been in the solitude of the high seas. No foot-fall re-echoed through that strange abode. Sound of chariot-wheel there was none. Nothing was audible but the soft dip of the oar, and the startled shout of an occasional gondolier, who feared, perhaps, that our heavier craft might send his slim skiff to the bottom. In about a quarter of an hour we turned out of the Grand Canal, and began threading our way amid those innumerable narrow channels which traverse Venice in all directions. Then it was that the dismal silence of the city fell upon my heart. The canals we were now navigating were not over three yards in width. They were long and gloomy; and tall, massive palaces, sombre and spectral in the gloom, rose out of the sea on either hand. There were columns at their entrances, with occasional pieces of statuary, for which time had woven a garland of weeds. Their lower windows were heavily grated; their marble steps were laved by the idle tide; and their warehouse doors, through which had passed, in their time, the merchandise of every clime, had long been unopened, and were rotting from age. As we pursued our way, we passed under low-browed arches, from which uncouth faces, cut in the stone, looked down upon us, and grinned our welcome. The voice of man, the light of a candle, the sound of a millstone, was not there. It seemed a city of the dead. The inhabitants had lived and died ages ago, and had left their palaces to be tenanted by the mermaids and spirits of the deep, for other occupants I could see none. Spectral fancies began to haunt my imagination. I conceived of the canal we were traversing as the Styx, our gondola as the boat of Charon, and ourselves as a company of ghosts, who had passed from earth, and were now on our silent way to the inexorable bar of Rhadamanthus. A more spectral procession we could not have made, with our spectral boat gliding noiselessly through the water, with its spectral steersman, and its crowd of spectral passengers, though my fancy, instead of being a fancy, had been a reality. All things around me were sombre, shadowy, silent, as Hades itself.

[Pg 175]

[Pg 176]

Suddenly our gondola made a rapid sweep round a tall corner. Then it was that the Queen of the Adriatic, in all her glory, burst upon us,—

"Looking a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers."

We were flung right in front of the great square of St. Mark. It was like the instantaneous raising of the curtain from some glorious vision, or like the sudden parting of the clouds around Mont Blanc; or, if I may use such a simile, like the unfolding of the gates of a better world to the spirit, after passing through the shadows of the tomb. The spacious piazza, bounded on all sides with noble structures in every style of architecture, reflected the splendour of a thousand lamps. There was the palace of the Doge, which I knew not as yet; and there, on its lofty column, was the winged lion of St Mark, which it was impossible not to know; and, crowding the piazza, and walking to and fro on its marble floor, was a countless multitude of men in all the costumes of the world. With the deep hum of voices was softly blended the sound of the Italian lute. A few strokes of the oar brought us to the Hotel dell' Europa. I made a spring from the gondola, and alighted on the steps of the hotel.

[Pg 177]

CHAPTER XV.

CITY OF VENICE.

[Pg 178]

Sabbath Morning—Beauty of Sunrise on the Adriatic—Worship in S. Mark's—Popish Sabbath-schools—Sale of Indulgences for Living and Dead—An Astrologer—How the Venetians spend their Sabbath Afternoon and Evening—The Martyrs of Venice—A Young Englishman in Trouble—The Doge's Palace—The Stone Lions—The Prisons of Venice—The Venetians Discard their Old God, and adopt a New—The Gothic Tower—The

Academy of Fine Arts—The Moral of Venice—Why do Nations Die?—Common Theory Unsatisfactory—History hitherto a Series of ever-recurring Cycles, ending in Barbarism—Instances—The "Three-score and Ten" of Nations—The Solution to be sought with reference to the False Religions—The Intellect of the Nation outgrows these—Conscience is Dissolved—Virtue is Lost—Slavery and Barbarism ensue—Christianity only can give Immortality to Nations—Decadence of Civilization under Romanism—A Papist foretelling the Doom of Popery.

THE deep boom of the Austrian cannon awoke me next morning at day-break. I remembered that it was Sabbath; and never had I seen the Sabbath dawn amidst a silence so majestic. More tranquil could not have been its first opening in the bowers of Eden. In this city of ocean there was no sound of hurrying feet, no rattle of chariot-wheel, nor any of those multitudinous noises that distract the cities of earth. There was silence on the domes of Venice, silence on her seas, silence in the air around her. In a little the sun rose, and shed a flood of glory on the Lagunes. It would be difficult to describe the grandeur of the scene, which has nothing elsewhere of the kind to equal it,—the white marble city, serenely seated on the bosom of the Adriatic, with the Lagunes outspread in the morning sun like a mirror of molten gold. But, alas! it was only a glorious vision; for the power and wealth of Venice are departed.

[Pg 179]

"The long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust.

Empty halls,
Thin streets and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthral,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls."

The gun which had awaked me reminds the Queen of the Adriatic every morning that the day of her dominion and glory is over, and that the night has come upon her,—a night, the deep unbroken shadows of which, even the bright morning that was now opening on the Adriatic could not dispel.

After breakfast I hurried to the church of S. Mark. Mass was proceeding as usual; and a large crowd of worshippers,—spectators I should rather say,—stood densely packed in the chancel. If I except the Madeleine in Paris, I have nowhere seen in a Roman Catholic church an attendance at all approximating even a tolerable congregation, save here. I remarked, too, that these were not the beggars which usually form the larger proportion of the attendance, such as it is, in Roman churches. The people in S. Mark's were well dressed, though it was not easy to conceive where these fine clothes had come from, seeing the sea has now failed Venice, and land she never possessed. This was the first symptom I saw (I met others in the course of the day) that in Venice the Roman religion has a stronger hold upon the people than in the rest of Italy. It is an advantage in this respect to be some little distance from Rome, and to have an insular position. Besides, I believe that the priests in Venetian Lombardy, and, I presume, in Venice also, are men of more reputable lives than their brethren in other parts of the Peninsula. Anciently it was not so. Venice was wont to be termed "the paradise of monks." There no pleasure allowable to a man of the world was forbidden to a priest. The Senate, jealous of everything that might abridge its authority, encouraged this relaxation of the Church's discipline, in the hope of lowering the influence of its clergy with the people.

[Pg 180]

S. Mark's is an ancient, quaint-looking pile, with the dim hoar light of history around it. On its threshold Pope Alexander III. met the Emperor Frederick in 1177, and, with pride unabated by his enforced flight from Rome in the disguise of a cook, put his foot upon the monarch's neck, repeating the words of the psalm,—"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder." This high temple of the Adriatic is vast and curious, but wanting in effect, owing to the low roof and the gloomy light. The Levant was searched for columns and marbles to decorate it; acres of gold-leaf have been expended in gilding it; and every corner is stuck full of allegorical devices, some of which are so very ingenious, that they have not yet been read. The priests wore a style of dress admirably befitting the finery of the Cathedral; for their vestments were bespangled with gold and curious devices. What a contrast to the simple temple and the plain earnest worshippers with whom I had passed my former Sabbath amid the Vaudois hills! But the God of the Vaudois, unlike the wafer-god of the priests, "dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

Passing along on the narrow paved footpaths which tie back to back the long lofty ranges of the city,—the fronts being filled with the ocean,—I visited several of its one hundred and twenty churches. I found mass ended, and the congregation, if any such there had been, dismissed; but I saw what was even more indicative of a reviving superstition: in every church I entered I found classes of boys and girls under instruction. The Sabbath-school system was in full operation in Venice, in Rome's behalf. The boys were in charge of the young priests; and the girls, of the nuns and sisters. In some cases, laymen had been pressed into the service, and were occupied in unfolding the mysteries of transubstantiation to the young mind. Seating myself on a bench in presence of a class of boys, I watched the course of instruction. Their text-book was the "Catechism of Christian Doctrine," which contains the elements of the Roman faith, as fixed by

[Pg 181]

the Council of Trent. The boys were repeating the Catechism to the teacher. No explanations were given, for the process was simply that of fixing dogmas in the memory,—of conveying as much of fact, or what professed to be so, as it was possible to convey into the mind without awakening the understanding. The boys were taught to *believe*, not *reason*; and those who acquitted themselves best had little medals and pictures of St Francis given them as prizes. I remarked that most of the shops were shut: indeed, so little business is done in Venice, that this involved no sacrifice to the traders. As it was, however, the city contrasted favourably with Paris; than the Sabbaths of which, I know of nothing more terrible on earth. I remarked, too, that if the trade of the Adriatic is at an end, and beggars crowd the quays which princes once trod, and gondolas, in funereal black, glide gloomily through those waters which rich argosies ploughed of old, the spiritual traffic of Venice flourishes more than ever. I read on the doors of all the churches, "INDULGENCES SOLD HERE FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, AS IN ROME." What matters it that the Adriatic is no longer the highway of the world's merchandise, and that India is now closed to Venice? Is not the whole of Peter's treasury open to her; and, to facilitate the enriching commerce, have not the priests obligingly opened a direct road to the celestial mine, to spare the Venetians the necessity of the more circuitous path by the Seven Hills? Happy Venice! her children may be starved now, but paradise is their's hereafter.

[Pg 182]

After noon each betook himself to what pastime he pleased. Not a few opened their shops. Others gathered round an astrologer,—a personage no longer to be seen in the cities of the west,—who had taken his stand on the *Riva degli Schiavoni*, and there, begirt with zone inscribed with cabalistic characters, and holding in his hand his wizard's staff, was setting forth, with stentorian voice, his marvellous power of healing by the combined help of the stars and his drugs. By the way, why should the profession of astrology and the cognate arts be permitted to only one class of men? In the middle ages, two classes of conjurors competed for the public patronage, but with most unequal success. The one class professed to be master of spells that were all-powerful over the elements of the material world,—the air, the earth, the ocean. The other arrogated an equal power over the invisible and spiritual world. They were skilled in a mysterious rite, which had power to open the gates of purgatory, and dismiss to a happier abode, souls there immured in woe. The pretensions of both were equally well founded: both were jugglers, and merited to have fared alike; but society, while it lavished all its credence and all its patronage upon the one, denounced the other as impostors. One colossal system of necromancy filled Europe; but the age gave the priest a monopoly; and so jealously did it guard his rights, that the conjuror who did not wear a cassock was banished or burned. We can assign no reason for the odium under which the one lay, and the repute in which the other was held, save that the art, though one, was termed witchcraft in the one case, and religion in the other. The one was compelled to shroud his mysteries in the darkness of the night, and seek the solitary cave for the performance of his spells. The arts of the other were performed in magnificent and costly cathedrals, in presence of admiring assemblies. The latter were the licensed dealers in magic; and, enjoying the public patronage, they carried their pretensions to a pitch which their less favoured brethren dared not attempt to rival. They juggled on a gigantic scale, and the more enormous the cheat, the better was it received. They rapidly grew in numbers and wealth. Their chief, the great Roman necromancer, enjoyed the state of a temporal prince, and had a whole kingdom appropriated to his use, that he might suitably support his rank and dignity as arch-conjuror.

[Pg 183]

But to return to Venice;—the great stream of concourse flowed in the direction of the *Giardini Pubblici*, which are a nook of one of the more southerly islands on which the city stands, fitted up as a miniature landscape, its lilliputian hills and vales being the only ones the Venetians ever see. The intercourse betwixt Venice and the Continent has no doubt become more frequent since the opening of the railway; but formerly it was not uncommon to find persons who had never been on the land, and who had no notion of ploughs, waggons, carts, gardens, and a hundred other things that seem quite inseparable from the existence of a nation. Twilight came, walking with noiseless sandals on the seas. A delicious light mantled the horizon; the domes of the city stood up with silent sublimity into the sky; and over them floated, in the deep azure, a young moon, thin as a single thread, and bright as the polished steel.

[Pg 184]

"A silver bow,
New bent in heaven."

When darkness fell on the Lagunes, the glories of the piazza of San Marco again blazed forth. What with cafés and countless lamps, a flood of light fell upon the marble pavement, on which some ten or twelve thousand people, rich and poor, were assembled, and were being regaled with occasional airs from a numerous band. The Sabbath closed in the Adriatic not altogether so tranquilly as it had opened.

The Venetians have long been famous for their peculiar skill in combining devotion with pleasure,—more devout than home in the morning, and gayer than Paris in the evening. Such has long been the character of the Queen of the Adriatic. She has been truly, as briefly described by the poet,—

"The revel of the earth, the mask of Italy!"

Once a better destiny appeared to be about to dawn on Venice. In the sixteenth century the Reformation knocked at her gates, and for a moment it seemed as if these gates were to be

opened, and the stranger admitted. Had it been so, the chair of her Doge would not now have been empty, nor would Austrian manacles have been pressing upon her limbs. "The evangelical doctrine had made such progress," writes Dr M'Crie, "in the city of Venice, between the years 1530 and 1542, that its friends, who had hitherto met in private for mutual instruction and religious exercises, held deliberations on the propriety of organizing themselves into regular congregations, and assembling in public." Several members of the Senate were favourable to it, and hopes were entertained at one time that the authority of that body would be interposed in its behalf. This hope was strengthened by the fact, that when Ochino ascended the pulpit, "the whole city ran in crowds to hear their favourite preacher." But, alas! the hope was delusive. It was the Inquisition, not the Reformation, to which Venice opened her gates; and when I surveyed her calm and beautiful Lagunes, my emotions partook at once of grief and exultation,—grief at the remembrance of the many midnight tragedies enacted on them, and exultation at the thought, that in the seas of Venice there sleeps much holy dust awaiting the resurrection of the just. "Drowning was the mode of death to which they doomed the Protestants," says Dr M'Crie, "either because it was less cruel and odious than committing them to the flames, or because it accorded with the customs of Venice. But if the *autos da fe* of the Queen of the Adriatic were less barbarous than those of Spain, the solitude and silence with which they were accompanied were calculated to excite the deepest horror. At the dead hour of midnight the prisoner was taken from his cell, and put into a gondola or Venetian boat, attended only, besides the sailors, by a single priest, to act as confessor. He was rowed out into the sea, beyond the Two Castles, where another boat was in waiting. A plank was then laid across the two gondolas, upon which the prisoner, having his body chained, and a heavy stone affixed to his feet, was placed; and, on a signal given, the gondolas retiring from one another, he was precipitated into the deep." "We can do nothing against the truth," says the apostle. Venice is rotting in her Lagunes: the Reformation, shaking off the chains with which men attempted to bind it, is starting on a new career of progress.

[Pg 185]

Next morning, at breakfast in my hotel, formerly the palace of the Giustiniani, I met a young Englishman, who had just come from Rome. He had the misfortune to be of the same name with one on the "suspected list," and for this offence he was arrested on entering the Austrian territory; and, though allowed to come on to Venice, his passport was taken from him, and his journey to England, which he meant to make by way of Trieste and Vienna, stopped. The list to which I have referred, which is kept at all the continental police offices, and which the eye of policeman or sbirro only can see, has created a sort of inquisition for Europe. The poor traveller has no means of knowing who has denounced him, or why; and wherever he goes, he finds a vague suspicion surrounding him, which he can neither penetrate nor clear up, and which exposes him to numberless and by no means petty annoyances. I accompanied my friend, after breakfast, to the *Prefecture*, to transact my own passport matters, and was glad to find that the authorities were now satisfied that he was not the same man who figured on the black list. Still they had no apology, no reparation, to offer him: on the contrary, he was informed that he must submit to a detention of two or three days more, till his passport should be forwarded from the provincial office where it was lying. His misfortune was my advantage, for it gave me an intelligent and obliging companion for the rest of the day; and we immediately set out to visit together all the great objects in Venice. It would be preposterous to dwell on these, for an hundred pens have already described them better; and my object is to advert to one great lesson which this fallen city,—for the sea, which once was the bulwark and throne of Venice, is now her prison,—teaches.

[Pg 186]

Betaking ourselves to a gondola, we passed down the Giudecca, Canal. We much admired—as who would not?—the noble palaces which on either hand rose so proudly from the bosom of the deep, yet invested with an air of silent desolation, which made the heart sad, even while their beauty delighted the eye. We disembarked at the stairs of the *piazza* of S. Mark, and repaired to the Doge's palace,—the dwelling of a line of rulers haughtier than kings, and the throne of a republic more oppressive than tyrannies. We walked through its truly majestic halls, glowing with great paintings from Venetian history; and visited its senatorial chamber, and saw the vacant places of its nobles, and the empty chair of its Doge. There was here no lack of materials for moralizing, had time permitted. She that sat as a Queen upon the waves,—that said, "I am of perfect beauty,"—that sent her fleets to the ends of the earth, and gathered to her the riches and glory of all nations,—alas! how is she fallen! "The princes of the sea" have "come down from their thrones, and" laid "away their robes, and put off their brodered garments." "What city is like" Venice,—"like the destroyed in the midst of the sea!"

[Pg 187]

We passed out between the famous stone lions, which, even so late as the end of the last century, no Venetian could look on but with terror. There they sat, with open jaws, displaying their fearfully significant superscription, "*Denunzie secrete*,"—realizing the poet's idea of republics guarded by dragons and lions. The use of these guardian lions the Venetians knew but too well. Accusations dropped by spies and informers into their open mouths, were received in a chamber below. Thus the bolt fell upon the unsuspecting citizen, but the hand from which it came remained invisible. Crossing by the "bridge of sighs,"—the canal, *Rio de Palazzo*, which runs behind the ducal palace,—we entered the state prisons of Venice. In the dim light I could discern what seemed a labyrinth of long narrow passages; traversing which, we arrived at the dungeons. I entered one of them: it was vaulted all round; and its only furniture, besides a ring and chain,

was a small platform of boards, about half a foot from the floor, which served as the prisoner's bed. In the wall of the cell was a small aperture, by which the light might be made to stream in upon the prisoner, when the jailor did not wish to enter, simply by placing the lamp in an opposite niche in the passage. Here crime, despair, madness, and sometimes innocence, have dwelt. Horrible secrets seemed to hover about its roof, and float in its air, and to be ready to break upon me from every stone of the dungeon. I longed, yet trembled, to hear them. But silent they are, and silent they will remain, till that day when "the sea shall give up its dead." There are yet lower dungeons, deep beneath water-mark, but I was told that these are now walled up.

We emerged again upon the marble piazzetta; and more welcome than ever was the bright light, and the noble grace of the buildings. At its southern extremity, where the piazzetta looks out upon the Adriatic, are two stately granite columns; the one surmounted by St Theodore, and the other by the lion of St Mark. These are the two gods of Venice. They were to the Republic what the two calves were to Israel,—their all-powerful protectors; and so devoutly did the Venetians worship them, that even the god of the Seven Hills became jealous of them. "The Venetians in general care little about God," says an old traveller, "less about the Pope, but a great deal about St Mark." St Theodore sheltered the Republic in its infancy; but when it grew to greatness, it deemed it unbecoming its dignity to have only a subordinate for its tutelary deity. Accordingly, Venice sought and obtained a god of the first water. The Republic brought over the body of St Mark, enshrined it in a magnificent church, and left its former patron no alternative but to cross the Lagoon, or occupy a second place.

Before bidding adieu to the piazza of St Mark, around which there hovers so many historic memories, and which every style of architecture, from the Greek and the Byzantine down to the Gotho-Italian, has met to decorate, and which, we may add, in point of noble grace and chaste beauty is perhaps not excelled in the world, we must be allowed to mention one object, which appeared to us strangely out of keeping with the spot and its edifices. It is the tall Gothic tower that rises opposite the Byzantine front of S. Mark's Cathedral. It attains a height of upwards of three hundred feet, and is used for various purposes, which, however, it could serve equally well in some other part of Venice. It strikes one the more, that it is the one deformity of the place. It reminded me of the entrance of a clown at a royal levee, or the appearance of harlequin in a tragedy.

Betaking ourselves again to a gondola, and gliding noiselessly along the grand canal,—

"For silent rows the songless gondolier,"

we visited the *Accademia delle Belle Arte*. It resembled a great and elaborately compiled work on painting, and I could there read off the history of the rise and progress of the art in Venice. The several galleries were arranged, like the successive chapters of a book, in chronological order, beginning with the infancy of the art, and going on to its full noon, under the great masters of the Lombard school,—Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto, and others. The pictures of the inner saloons were truly magnificent; but on these I do not dwell.

Let us sit down here, in the midst of the seas, and meditate a little on the great *moral* of Venice. We shall let the poet state the case:—

"Her daughters had their dowers

From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East

Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.

In purple was she robed, and of her feast

Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased."

But now, after power, wealth, empire, have come corruption, slavery, ruin; and Venice,—

"Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,

Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose."

But the course which Venice has run is that of all States which have yet appeared in the world. History is but a roll of defunct empires, whose career has been alike; and Venice and Rome are but the latest names on the list. Egypt, Chaldea, Tyre, Greece, Rome,—to all, as if by an inevitable law, there came, after the day of civilization and empire, the night of barbarism and slavery. This has been repeated again and again, till the world has come to accept of it as its established course. We see States emerging from infancy and weakness slowly and laboriously, becoming rich, enlightened, powerful; and the moment they seemed to have perfected their civilization, and consolidated their power, they begin to fall. The past history of our race is but a history of efforts, successful up to a certain point, but only to a certain point; for whenever that point has been reached, all the fruits of past labour,—all the accumulations of legislators, philosophers, and warriors,—have been swept away, and the human family have found that they had to begin the same laborious process over again,—to toil upwards from the same gulph, to be overtaken by the same disaster. History has been simply a series of ever-recurring cycles, ending in barbarism. This is a discouraging aspect of human affairs, and throws a doubtful shadow upon the future; but it is the aspect in which history exhibits them. The Etrurian tombs speak of an era of civilization and power succeeded by barbarism. The mounds of Nineveh speak of a similar revolution. The day of Greek glory sank at last in unbroken night. At the fall of the Roman

empire, barbarism overspread Europe; and now the cycle appears to have come round to the nations of modern Europe. Since the middle of last century there has been a marked and fearfully rapid decline in all the States of continental Europe. The entire region south of the Alps, including the once powerful kingdoms of Italy and Spain, is sunk in slavery and barbarism. France alone retains its civilization; but how long is it likely to retain it, with its strength undermined by revolution, and its liberties completely prostrated? Niebuhr has given expression in his works to his decided opinion, *that the dark ages are returning*. And are we not at this moment witnessing an attempted repetition of the Gothic invasion of the fourth century, in the barbarian north, which is pressing with ever-growing weight upon the feeble barrier of the East?

"Nations melt

From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt."

But why is this? It would almost seem, when we look at these examples and facts, as if there were some malignant influence sporting with the world's progress,—some adverse power fighting against man, baulking all his efforts at self-advancement, and compelling him, Sisyphus-like, to roll the stone eternally. Has the Creator set limits to the life of kingdoms, as to that of man? Certain it is, they have seldom survived their twelfth century. The most part have died at or about their twelve hundred and sixtieth year. Is this the "three-score-and-ten" of nations, beyond which they cannot pass?

[Pg 192]

The common explanation of the death of nations is, that power begets wealth, wealth luxury, and luxury feebleness and ruin. But we are unable to accept this as a satisfactory account of the matter. It appears a mere *statement* of the fact,—not a *solution* of it. It is evidently the design of Providence that nations should live happily in the abundant enjoyment of all good things; and that every human being should have all that is good for him, of what the earth produces, and the labour of man can create. Then, why should affluence, and the other accessories of power, have so uniformly a corrupting and dissolving effect upon society? This the common theory leaves unexplained. There is no necessary connection betwixt the enjoyment of abundance and the corruption of nations. The Creator surely has not ordained laws which must necessarily result in the death of society.

The real solution, we think, it is not difficult to find. All religions, one excepted, which have hitherto appeared in the world, have been unable to hold the balance between the *intellect* and the *conscience* beyond a certain stage; and therefore, all kingdoms which have arisen hitherto have been unable to exist beyond a certain term. So long as a nation is in its childhood, a false religion affords room enough for the free play of its intellect. Its religion being regarded as true and authoritative, the conscience of the nation is controlled by it. So long as conscience is upheld, law has authority, individual and social virtue is maintained, and the nation goes on acquiring power, amassing wealth, and increasing knowledge. But whenever it attains a certain stage of enlightenment, and a certain power of independent thinking, it begins to canvass the claims of that religion which formerly awed it. It discovers its falsehood, the national conscience breaks loose, and an era of scepticism ensues. With the destruction of conscience and the rise of scepticism, law loses its authority, individual honour and social virtue decline, and slavery or anarchy complete the ruin of the state. This is the course which the nations of the world have hitherto run. They have uniformly begun to decline, not when they attained a certain amount of power or of wealth, but when they attained such an amount of intellectual development as set free the national conscience from the restraints of religion, or what professed to be so. No false religion can carry a nation beyond a certain point; because no such religion can stand before a certain stage of light and inquiry, which is sure to be reached; and when that stage is reached,—in other words, whenever the intellect dissolves the bonds of conscience,—the basis of all authority and order is razed, and from that moment national decline begins. Hence, in all nations an era of scepticism has been contemporaneous with an era of decay.

[Pg 193]

Let us take the ancient Romans as an example. In the youth of their nation their gods were revered; and in the existence of a national conscience, a basis was found for law and virtue; and while these lasted the empire flourished. But by and by the genius of its great thinkers leavened the nation; an era of scepticism ensued; that scepticism inaugurated an age of feeble laws and strong passions; and the declension which set in issued at length in downright barbarism.

Papal Rome has run the very same course. The feeble intellect of the European nations accepted Romanism as a religion, just as the Romans before them had accepted of paganism. But the Reformation introduced a period of growing enlightenment and independent thinking; and by the end of the eighteenth century, Romanism had shared the fate which paganism had done before it. The masses of Europe generally had lost faith in it as a religion; then came the atheism of the French school; an era of feeble laws and strong passions again returned; the selfish and isolating principle came into play; and at this moment the nations of continental Europe are rapidly sinking into barbarism. Thus, the history of the race under the reign of the false religions exhibits but alternating fits of superstition and scepticism, with their corresponding eras of civilization and barbarism. And it necessarily must be so; because, these religions not being compatible with the indefinite extension of man's knowledge, they do not secure the continued

[Pg 194]

action and authority of conscience; and without conscience, national progress, and even existence, is impossible.

Is there, then, no immortality in reserve for nations? Must they continue to die? and must the history of our race in all time coming be just what it has been in all time past,—a series of rapidly alternating epochs of partial civilization and destructive barbarism? No. He who is the former of society is the author of the Bible; and we may be sure that there is a beautiful meetness and harmony between the laws of the one and the doctrine of the other. Christianity alone can enable society to fulfil its terrestrial destiny, because it alone is true, and, being true, it admits of the utmost advancement of the human understanding. In its case the centrifugal force of the intellect can never overcome the centripetal power of the conscience. It has nothing to fear from the advance of science. It keeps pace with the human mind, however rapid its progress. Nay, more; the more the human mind is enlarged, the more apparent becomes the truth of Christianity, and, by consequence, the greater becomes the authority of conscience. Under the reign of Christianity, then, there is no point in the onward progress of society where conscience dissolves, and leaves man and nations devoid of virtue; there is no point where conviction compels man to become a sceptic, and scepticism pulls him down into barbarism. As the atmosphere which surrounds our planet supplies the vital element alike to the full-grown man and to the infant, so Christianity supplies the breath of life to society in all its stages,—in its full-grown manhood, as well as in its immature infancy. There is more meaning than the world has yet understood in the statement that the Gospel has brought "life and immortality to light." Its Divine Founder introduced upon the stage that system which is the *life* of nations. The world does not furnish an instance of a nation that has continued to be Christian, that has perished. We believe the thing to be impossible. While great Rome has gone down, and Venice sits in widowed glory on the Adriatic, the poor Waldenses are still a people. The world tried but could not extinguish them. Christianity is synonymous with life: it gives immortality to nations here, and to the individual hereafter. Hence Daniel, when unfolding the state of the world in the last age, gives us to understand that, when once thoroughly Christianized, society will no longer be overwhelmed by those periodic lapses into barbarism which in every former age has set limits to the progress of States. "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." Unlike every preceding era, immortality will then be the chief characteristic of nations.

[Pg 195]

But must it not strike every one, in connection with this subject, that in proportion as Romanism develops itself, the nations under its sway sink the deeper into barbarism? This fact Romanist writers now see and bewail. What stronger condemnation of their system could they pronounce? For surely if religion be of God, it must, like all else that comes from Him, be beneficent in its influence. He who ordained the sun to irradiate the earth with his light, and fructify it with his warmth, would not have given a religion that fetters the understanding and barbarises the species. And yet, if Romanism be divine, He has done so; for the champions of that Church, compelled by the irresistible logic of facts, now tacitly acknowledge that a decaying civilization is following in the wake of Roman Catholicism in every part of the world. Listen, for instance, to the following confession of M. Michel Chevalier, in the *Journal des Debats*:—

[Pg 196]

"I cannot shut my eyes to the facts that militate against the influence of the Catholic spirit,—facts which have transpired more especially during the last third of a century, and which are still in progress,—facts that are fitted to excite in every mind that sympathises with the Catholic cause, the most lively apprehensions. On comparing the respective progress made since 1814 by non-Catholic Christian nations, with the advancement of power attained by Catholic nations, one is struck with astonishment at the disproportion. England and the United States, which are Protestant Powers, and Russia, a Greek Power, have assumed to an incalculable degree the dominion of immense regions, destined to be densely peopled, and already teeming with a large population. England has nearly conquered all those vast and populous regions known under the generic name of India. In America she has diffused civilization to the extreme north, in the deserts of Upper Canada. Through the toil of her children, she has taken possession of every point and position of an island,—New Holland (Australia),—which is as large as a continent; and she has been sending forth her fresh shoots over all the archipelagos with which the great ocean is studded. The United States have swollen out to a prodigious extent, in wealth and possessions, over the surface of their ancient domain. They have, moreover, enlarged on all sides the limits of that domain, anciently confined to a narrow stripe along the shores of the Atlantic. They now sit on the two oceans. San Francisco has become the pendant of New York, and promises speedily to rival it in its destinies. They have proved their superiority over the Catholic nations of the New World, and have subjected them to a dictatorship which admits of no farther dispute. To the authority of these two Powers,—England and the United States,—after an attempt made by the former on China, the two most renowned empires of the East,—empires which represent nearly the numerical half of the human race,—China and Japan,—seem to be on the point of yielding. Russia, again, appears to be assuming every day a position of growing importance in Europe. During all this time, what way has been made by the Catholic nations? The foremost of them all, the most compact, the most glorious,—France,—which seemed fifty years ago to have mounted the throne of civilization, has seen, through a course of strange disasters, her sceptre shivered and her power dissolved. Once and again has she risen to her feet, with noble courage and indomitable energy; but every time, as all expected to see her take a rapid flight upward, fate has

[Pg 197]

sent her, as a curse from God, a revolution to paralyze her efforts, and make her miserably fall back. Unquestionably, since 1789 the balance of power between Catholic civilization and non-Catholic civilization has been reversed."

CHAPTER XVI.

[Pg 198]

PADUA.

Doves of Venice—Re-cross the Lagunes—Padua—Wretchedness of Interior—Misery of its Inhabitants—Splendour of its Churches—The Shrine of St Antony—His Sermon to a Congregation of Fishes—A Restaurant in Padua—Reach the Po at Day-break—Enter Peter's Patrimony—Find the Apostles again become Fishermen and Tax-Gatherers—Arrest—Liberty.

CONTENTING myself with a hasty perusal of the great work on painting which the academy forms, and which it had taken so many ages and so many various masters to produce, I returned again to the square of St Mark. Doves in thousands were assembled on the spot, hovering on wing at the windows of the houses, or covering the pavement below, at the risk, as it seemed, of being trodden upon by the passengers. I inquired at my companion what this meant. He told me that a rich old gentleman by last will and testament had bequeathed a certain sum to be expended in feeding these fowls, and that, duly as the great clock in the Gothic tower struck two, a certain quantity of corn was every day thrown from a window in the piazza. Every dove in the "Republic" is punctual to a minute. These doves have come to acquire a sort of sacred character, and it would be about as hazardous to kill a dove in Venice, as of old a cat in Egypt. We wish some one would do as much for the beggars, which are yet more numerous, and who know no more, when they get up in the morning, where they are to be fed, than do the fowls of heaven. Trade there is none; "to dig," they have no land, and, even if they had, they are too indolent; they want, too, the dove's wing to fly away to some happier country. Their seas have shut them in; their marble city is but a splendid prison. The story of Venice is that of Tyre over again,—her wealth, her glory, her luxuriousness, and now her doom. But we must leave her. Bidding adieu, on the stairs of St Mark, to the partner of the day's explorations, with a regret which those only can understand who have had the good fortune to meet an intelligent and estimable companion in a foreign land, I leaped into a gondola, and glided away, leaving Venice sitting in silent melancholy beauty amid her tideless seas.

[Pg 199]

Traversing again the long bridge over the Lagunes, and the flat country beyond, covered with memorials of decay in the shape of dilapidated villas, and crossing the full-volumed Brenta, rolling on within its lofty embankments, I sighted the fine Tyrolean Alps on the right, and, after a run of twenty-four miles, the gray towers of Padua, at about a mile's distance from the railway, on the left.

Poor Padua! Who could enter it without weeping almost. Of all the wretched and ruinous places I ever saw, this is the most wretched and ruinous,—hopelessly, incurably ruinous. Padua does, indeed, look imposing at a little distance. Its fine dome, its numerous towers, the large vine-stocks which are rooted in its soil, the air of vast fertility which is spread over the landscape, and the halo of former glory which, cloud-like, rests above it, consort well with one's preconceived ideas of this once illustrious seat of learning, which even the youth of our own land were wont to frequent; but enter it,—alas the dismal sight!—ruins, filth, ignorance, poverty, on every hand. The streets are narrow and gloomy, from being lined with heavy and dark arcades; the houses, which are large, and bear marks of former opulence, are standing in many instances untenanted. Not a few stately mansions have been converted into stables, or carriers' sheds, or are simply naked walls, which the dogs of the city, or other creatures, make their den. The inhabitants, pale, emaciated, and wrapt in huge cloaks, wander through the streets like ghosts. Were Padua a heap of ruins, without a single human being on or near its site, its desolation would be less affecting. An unbearable melancholy sat down upon me the moment I entered it, and the recollection oppresses me at the distance of three years.

[Pg 200]

In the midst of all this ruin and poverty, there rise I know not how many duomos and churches, with fine cupolas and towers, as if they meant to mock the misery upon which they look. They are the repositories of vast wealth, in the shape of silver lamps, votive offerings, paintings, and marbles. To appropriate a penny of that treasure in behalf of the wretched beings who swarm unfed and untaught in their neighbourhood, would bring down upon Padua the terrible ire of their great god St Antony. He is there known as "Il Santo" (the saint), and has a gorgeous temple erected in his honour, crowned with not less than eight cupolas, and illuminated day and night by golden lamps and silver candlesticks, which burn continually before his shrine. "There are narrow clefts in the monument that stands over him," says Addison, "where good Catholics rub their beads, and smell his bones, which they say have in them a natural perfume, though very like apoplectic balsam; and, what would make one suspect that they rub the marble with it, it is observed that the scent is stronger in the morning than at night." Were the precious metals and the costly marbles which are stored up in this church transmuted into current coin, the whole province of Padua might be supplied with ploughs and other needful implements of

[Pg 201]

agriculture. But it is better that nature alone should cultivate their fields, and that the Paduans should eat only what she is pleased to provide for them, than that, by robbing the shrine of St Antony, they should forfeit the good esteem of so powerful a patron, "the thrice holy Antony of Padua; the powerful curer of leprosy, tremendous driver away of devils, restorer of limbs, stupendous discoverer of lost things, great and wonderful defender from all dangers."

The miracles and great deeds of "the saint" are recorded on the tablets and bas-reliefs of the church. His most memorable exploit was his "preaching to an assembly of fishes," whom, "when the heretics would not regard his preaching," says his biographer, "he called together, in the name of God, to hear his holy Word." The congregation and the sermon were both extraordinary; and, if any reader is curious to see what a saint could have to say to a congregation of fishes, he will find the oration quoted *ad longam* in "Addison's Travels." The mule on which this great man rode was nearly as remarkable as his master. With a devotion worthy of the mule of St Antony, he left his hay, after a long fast, to be present at mass. The modern Paduans, from what I saw of them, fast quite as oft and as long as Antony's mule; whether they are equally punctual at mass I do not know.

My stay in Padua extended only from four in the afternoon till nine at night. The hours wore heavily, and I sought for a restaurant where I might dine. I was fortunate enough at length to discover a vast hall, or shed I should rather say, which was used as a restaurant. Some rich and noble Paduan had called it his in other days; now it received as guests the courier and the wayfarer. Its massive walls were quite naked, and enclosed an apartment so spacious, that its extremities were lost in darkness. Some dozen of small tables, all ready for dinner being served upon them, occupied the floor; and some three or four persons were seated at dinner. I took my seat at one of the tables, and was instantly served with capillini soup, and the usual *et ceteras*. I made a good repast, despite the haunted look of the chamber. On the conclusion of my dinner I repaired to the market-place, and, till the hour of *diligence* should arrive, I began pacing the pavement beneath the shadow of the town-hall, which looks as if it had been built as a kind of anticipation of the crystal palace, and the roof of which is said to be the largest unsupported by pillars in the world. It covers—so the Paduans believe—the bones of Livy, who is claimed as a native of Padua. It was here Petrarch died, which has given occasion to Lazzarini to join together the cradle of the historian and the tomb of the poet, in the following lines addressed to Padua:—

Here was he born whose lasting page displays
Rome's brightest triumphs, and who painted best;
Fit style for heroes, nor to shun the test,
Though Grecian art should vie, and Attic lays.
And here thy tuneful swan, Arezzo lies,
Who gave his Laura deathless name; than whom
No bard with sweeter grace has poured the song.
O, happy seat! O, favoured by the skies!
What store and store is thine, to whom belong
So rich a cradle and so rich a tomb!

I bought a pennyworth of grapes from one of the poor stall-keepers, and, in return for my coin, had my two extended palms literally heaped. I can safely say that the vine of Padua has not declined; the fruit was delicious; and, after making my way half through my purchase, I collected a few hungry boys, and divided the fragments amongst them.

It was late and dark when, ensconced in the interior of the *diligence*, we trundled out of the poor ruined town. The night was dreary and somewhat cold; I courted sleep, but it came not. My companions were mostly young Englishmen, but not of the intellectual stamp of the companion from whom I had parted that morning on the quay of Venice. They appeared to be travelling about mainly to look at pictures and smoke cigars. As to learning anything, they ridiculed the idea of such a thing in a country where there "was no society." It did not seem to have occurred to them that it might be worth while learning how it had come to pass that, in a country where one stumbles at every step on the stupendous memorials of a past civilization and knowledge, there is now no society. At length, after many hours' riding, we drew up before a tall white house, which the gray coat and bayonet of the Croat, and the demand for passports, told me was a police office. It was the last dogana on the Austrian territory. We were next requested to leave the *diligence* for a little. The day had not yet broke, but I could see that we were on the brink of a deep and broad river, which we were preparing to cross, but how, I could not discover, for I could see no bridge, but only something like a raft moored by the margin of the stream. On this frail craft we embarked, horses, *diligence*, passengers, and all; and, launching out upon the impetuous current, we reached, after a short navigation, the opposite shore. The river we had crossed was the Po, and the craft which had carried us over was a *pont colant*, or flying bridge. This was the frontier of the Papal States; and now, for the first time, I found myself treading the sacred soil of Peter's patrimony.

Peter, in the days of his flesh, was a fisherman; but some of his brother apostles were tax-gatherers; and here was the receipt of custom again set up. Both "toll" and "fishing-net," I had understood, were forsaken when their Master called them; but on my arrival I found the apostles all busy at their old trades: some fishing for men at Rome; and others, at the frontiers, levying

tribute, both of "the children" and of "strangers;" for on looking up, I could see by the dim light a low building, like an American log-house, standing at a little distance from the river's brink, with a huge sign-board stuck up over the door, emblazoned with the keys and the tiara. This told me that I was in the presence of the Apostolic Police-Office,—an ecclesiastical institution which, I doubt not, has its authority somewhere in the New Testament, though I cannot say that I have ever met with the passage in my readings in that book; but that, doubtless, is because I want the Church's spectacles.

When one gets his name inserted in an Italian way-bill, he delivers up his passport to the *conducteur*, who makes it his business to have it viséed at the several stations which are planted thick along all the Italian routes,—the owner, of course, reckoning for the charges at the end of the journey. In accordance with this custom, our *conducteur* entered the shed-like building I have mentioned, to lay his way-bill and his passports before the officials within. In the interim, we took our places in the vehicle. The *conducteur* was in no hurry to return, but I dreaded no evil. I had had a wakeful night; and now, throwing myself into my nook in the *diligence*, the stillness favoured sleep, and I was half unconscious, when I found some one pulling at my shoulder, and calling on me to leave the carriage. "What is the matter?" I inquired. "Your passport is not *en règle*," was the reply. "My passport not right!" I answered in astonishment; "it has been viséed at every police-office betwixt and London; and especially at those of Austria, under whose suzerainty the territory of Ferrara is, and no one may prevent me entering the Papal States." The man coolly replied, "You cannot go an inch farther with us;" and proceeded to take down my luggage, and deposit it on the bank. I stepped out, and bade the man conduct me to the people inside. Passing under the papal arms, we threaded a long narrow passage,—turned to the left,—traversed another long passage,—turned to the left again, and stood in a little chamber dimly lighted by a solitary lamp. The apartment was divided by a bench, behind which sat two persons,—the one a little withered old man, with small piercing eyes, and the other very considerably younger and taller, and with a face on which anxiety or mistrust had written fewer sinister lines. They quickly told me that my passport was not right, and that I could not enter the Papal States. I asked them to hand me the little volume; and, turning over its pages, I traced with them my progress from London to the Po, and showed that, on the testimony of every passport-office and legation, I was a good man and true up to the further banks of their river; and that if I was other now, I must have become so in crossing, or since touching their soil. They gave me to understand, in reply, that all these testimonies went for nothing, seeing I wanted the *imprimatur* of the papal consul in Venice. I assured them that omission was owing to misinformation I had received in Venice; that the Valet de Place (an authority in all such matters) at the Albergo dell' Europa had assured me that the two visées I had got in Venice were quite enough; and that the pontifical visée could be obtained in Ferrara or Bologna; and entreated them to permit me to go on to Ferrara, where I would lay my passport before the authorities, and have the error rectified. I shall never forget the emphasis with which the younger of the two officials replied, "Non possum." I had often declined "possum" to my old schoolmaster in former days, little dreaming that I was to hear the vocable pronounced with such terrible meaning in a little cell, at day-break, on the banks of the Po. The postilion cracked his whip,—I saw the *diligence* move off,—and the sound of its retreating wheels seemed like a farewell to friends and home. A sad, desolate feeling weighed upon me as I turned to the faces of the police-officers and gendarmes in whose power I was left. We all went back together into the little apartment of the passport office, where I opened a conversation with them, in order to discover what was to be done with me,—whether I was to be sent back to Venice, or home to England, or simply thrown into the Po. I made rapid progress in my Italian studies that day; and had it been my hap to be arrested a dozen days on end by the papal authorities, I should by that time have been a fluent Italian speaker. The result of much questioning and explanation was, that if I liked to forward a petition to the authorities in Ferrara, accompanied by my passport, I should be permitted to wait where I was till an answer could be returned. It was my only alternative; and, hiring a special messenger, I sent him off with my passport, and a petition craving permission to enter "the States," addressed to the Pontifical Legation at Ferrara. Meanwhile, I had a gendarme to take care of me.

To while away the time, I sallied out, and sauntered along the banks of the river. It was now full day: and the cheerful light, and the noble face of the Po,—here a superb stream, equal almost to the Rhine at Cologne,—rolling on to the Adriatic, chased away my pensiveness. The river here flows between lofty embankments,—the adjoining lands being below its level, and reminding one of Holland; and were any extraordinary inundation to happen among the Alps, and force the embankments of the Po, the territory around Ferrara, if not also that city itself, would infallibly be drowned. A few lighters and small craft, lifting their sails to the morning sun, were floating down the current; and here and there on the banks was a white villa,—the remains of that noble setting of palaces which adorned the Po when the House of D'Este vied in wealth and splendour with the larger courts of Europe. Prisoners must have breakfast; and I found a poor café in the little village, where I got a cup of coffee and an egg,—the latter unboiled, by the way; and discussed my meal in presence of the gendarme, who sat opposite me.

Toward noon the messenger returned, and to my joy brought back the papal permission to enter "the States." Light and short as my constraint had been, it was sufficient to make me feel what a magic influence is in liberty. I could again go whither I would; and the poor village of Ponte Lagoscuro, and even the faces of the two officials, assumed a kindlier aspect. Bidding these

last, whose Italian urbanity had won upon me, adieu, I started on foot for Ferrara, which lay on the plain some five miles in advance. The road thither was a magnificent one; but I learned afterwards that I had Napoleon to thank for it; but alas, what a picture the country presented! The water was allowed to stagnate along the path, and a thick, green scurf had gathered upon it. The rich black soil was covered with weeds, and the few houses I saw were mere hovels. The sun shone brilliantly, however, and strove to gild this scene of neglect and wretchedness. The day was the 28th of October, and the heat was that of a choice summer day in Scotland, with a much balmy air. I hurried on along the deserted road, and soon, on emerging from a wood, sighted the town of Ferrara, which stretched along the plain in a low line of roofs, with a few towers breaking the uniformity. Presenting my "pass" to the sentinel at the barrier, I entered the city in which Calvin had found an asylum and Tasso a prison.

[Pg 208]

Poor fallen Ferrara! Commerce, learning, the arts, religion, had by turns shed a glory upon it. Now all is over; and where the "Queen of the Po" had been, there sits on the darkened plain a poor city, mouldering into dust, with the silence of a sepulchre around it. I entered the suburbs, but sound of human voice there was none; not a single human being could I see. It might be ages since these streets were trodden, for aught that appeared. The doors were closed, and the windows were stanchioned with iron. In many cases there was neither door nor window; but the house stood open to receive the wind or rain, the fowls of heaven, or the dogs of the city, if any such there were. I passed on, and drew nigh the centre of the town; and now there began to be visible some signs of vitality. Struck at the extremities, life had retreated to the heart. A square castellated building of red brick, surrounded on all sides by a deep moat, filled with the water of the Po, and guarded by Austrian soldiers, upreared its towers before me. This was the Papal Legation. I entered it, and found my passport waiting me; and the tiara and the keys, emblazoned on its pages, told me that I was free of the Papal States.

CHAPTER XVII.

[Pg 209]

FERRARA.

Lovely in its Ruins—Number and Wealth of its Churches—Tasso's Prison—Renée's Palace—Calvin's Chamber—Influence of Woman on the Reformation—Renée and her Band—Reunion above—Utter Decay of its Trade, its Manufactures, its Knowledge.

EVEN in its ruins Ferrara is lovely. It wears in the tomb the sunset hues of beauty. Its streets run out in straight lines, and are of noble breadth and length. Unencumbered with the heavy arcades that darken Padua, the marble fronts of its palaces rise to a goodly height, covered with rich but exceedingly sweet and chaste designs. On the stone of their pilasters and door-posts the ilex puts forth its leaf, and the vine its grapes; and the carving is as fresh and sharp, in many instances, as if the chisel were but newly laid aside. But it is melancholy to see the long grass waving on its causeways, and the ivy clinging to the deserted doorways and balconies of palatial residences, and to hear the echoes of one's foot sounding drearily in the empty street.

I passed the afternoon in visiting the churches. There is no end of these, and night fell before I had got half over them. It amazes one to find in the midst of ruins such noble buildings, overflowing with wealth. Pictures, statuary, marbles, and precious metals, dazzle, and at last weary, the traveller, and form a strange contrast to the desolate fields, the undrained swamps, the mouldering tenements, and the beggarly population, that are collected around them. Of the churches of Ferrara, we may say as Addison of the shrine of Loretto, "It is indeed an amazing thing to see such a prodigious quantity of riches lie dead and untouched, in the midst of so much poverty and misery as reign on all sides of them. If these riches were all turned into current coin, and employed in commerce, they would make Italy the most flourishing country in the world."

[Pg 210]

Two objects specially invited my attention in Ferrara: the one was the prison of Tasso,—the other the palace of Renée, the Duchess of Ferrara. Tasso's prison is a mere vault in the courtyard of the hospital of St Anna, built up at one end with a brick wall, and closed at the other by a low and strong door. The floor is so damp that it yields to the foot; and the arched roof is so low that there is barely room to stand upright. I strongly doubt whether Tasso, or any other man, could have passed seven years in this cell and come out alive. It is written all over within and without with names, some of them illustrious ones. "Byron" is conspicuous in the crowd, cut in strong square characters in the stone; and near him is "Lamartine," in more graceful but smaller letters.

Tasso seems to have regarded his country as a prisoner not less than himself, and to have strung his harp at times to bewail its captivity. The dungeon "in which Alphonso bade his poet dwell" was dreary enough, but that of Italy was drearier still; for it is Italy, fully more than the poet, that may be regarded as speaking in the following lines, which furnish evidence that, along with Dante, and all the great minds of the period, Torquato Tasso had seen the hollowness of the Papal Church, and felt the galling bondage which that Church inflicts on both the intellect and the soul.

[Pg 211]

"O God, from this Egyptian land of woe,

Teeming with idols and their monstrous train,
 O'er which the galling yoke that I sustain
 Like Nilus makes my tears to overflow,
 To thee, her land of rest, my soul would go:
 But who, ah! who will break my servile chain?
 Who through the deep, and o'er the desert plain
 Will aid and cheer me, and the path will show?
 Shall God, indeed, the fowls and manna strew,—
 My daily bread? and dare I to implore
 Thy pillar and thy cloud to guide me, Lord?
 Yes, he may hope for all who trusts thy word.
 O then thy miracles in me renew;
 Thine be the glory, and my boasting o'er."

From the reputed prison of Tasso I went to see the roof which had sheltered the presiding intellect of the Reformation,—John Calvin. Tasso's glory is like a star, burning with a lovely light in the deep azure; Calvin's is like the sun, whose waxing splendour is irradiating two hemispheres. The palace of the illustrious Renée,—now the Austrian and Papal Legations, and literally a barrack for soldiers,—has no pretensions to beauty. Amid the graceful but decaying fabrics of the city, it erects its square unadorned mass of dull red, edged with a strip of lawn, a few cypresses, and a moat brim-full of water, which not only surrounds it on all sides, but intersects it by means of arches, and makes the castle almost a miniature of Venice. Good part of the interior is occupied as passport offices and guard-rooms. The staircase is of noble dimensions. Some of the rooms are princely, their panellings being mostly covered with paintings, but not of the first excellence. The small room in the southern quadrangle which Calvin is said to have occupied is now fitted up as an oratory; and a very pretty little show-room it is, with its marble altar-piece, its silver candlesticks, its crucifixes, and, in short, all the paraphernalia of such places. If there be any efficacy in holy water, the little chamber must by this time be effectually cleansed from the sad defilement of the arch-heretic.

[Pg 212]

Ferrara is indissolubly connected with the Reformation in Italy. In fact, it was the centre of the movement in the south of the Alps. This distinction it owed to its being the residence of Renée, the daughter of Louis XII. of France, and wife of Hercules II., Duke of Ferrara. This lady, to a knowledge of the ancient classics and contemporary literature, and the most amiable and generous dispositions, added a deep love of evangelical truth, and gladly extended shelter to the friends of the Reformation, whom persecution now forced to leave their native country. Thus there came to be assembled round her a galaxy of talent, learning, and piety. If we except John Calvin, who was known during his brief sojourn of three months as Charles Heppeville, the two noblest minds in this illustrious band were women,—Renée and Olympia Morata. The cause of the Reformation lies under great obligations to woman; though the part she acted in that great drama has never been sufficiently acknowledged.^[2] In the heart of woman, when sanctified by Divine grace, there lies concealed under a veil of gentleness and apparent timidity, a fund of fortitude and lofty resolution, which requires a fitting occasion to draw it forth; but when that occasion arrives, there is seen the strength and grandeur of the female character. For woman, whatever is noble, beautiful, and sublime, has peculiar attractions. A just cause, overborne by power or numbers, appeals peculiarly to her unselfish nature; and thus it has happened that the Reformation sometimes found in woman its most devoted disciple and its most undaunted champion. Who can tell how much the firmness and perseverance of the more prominent actors in these struggles were owing to her wise and affectionate counsels? And not only has she been the counsellor of man,—she has willingly shared his sufferings; and the same deep sensibility which renders her so shrinking on ordinary occasions, has at these times given her unconquerable strength, and raised her above the desolation of a prison,—above the shame and horror of a scaffold. Of such mould were the two illustrious women I have mentioned,—the accomplished Renée, the daughter of a king of France, and the yet more accomplished Olympia Morata, the daughter of a schoolmaster and citizen of Mantua.

[Pg 213]

To me these halls were sacred, for the feet which had trodden them three centuries ago. They were thronged with Austrian soldiers and passport officials; but I could people them with the mighty dead. How often had Renée assembled her noble band in this very chamber! How often here had that illustrious circle consulted on the steps proper to be taken for advancing their great cause! How often had they indulged alternate fears and hopes, as they thought now of the power arrayed against them, and now of the progress of the truth, and the confessors it was calling to its aid in every city of Italy! And when the deliberations and prayers of the day were ended, they would assemble on this lawn, to enjoy, under these cypresses, the delicious softness of the Italian twilight. Ah! who can tell the exquisite sweetness of such re-unions! and how inexpressibly soothing and welcome to men whom persecution had forced to flee from their native land, must it have been to find so secure a haven as this so unexpectedly opened to receive them! But ah! too soon were they forced out upon an ocean of storms. They were driven to different countries and to various fates,—some to a life of exhausting labour and conflict, some to exile, and some to the stake. But all this is over now: they dread the dungeon and the stake no more; they are wanderers no longer, having come to a land of rest. Renée has once again gathered her bright band around her, under skies whose light no cloud shall ever darken, and

[Pg 214]

whose calm no storm shall ever ruffle. But do they not still remember and still speak of the consultations and sweet communings which they had together under the shady cypress trees, and the still, rich twilights of Ferrara?

Ferrara was the first town subject to the Pope I had entered; and I had here an opportunity of marking the peculiar benefits which attend infallible government. This city is only less wretched than Padua; and the difference seems to lie rather in the more cheerful look of its buildings, than in any superior wealth or comfort enjoyed by its people. Its trade is equally ruined; it is even more empty of inhabitants; its walls, of seven miles' circuit, enclose but a handful of men, and these have a wasted and sickly look, owing to the unhealthy character of the country around. The view from its ramparts reminded me of the prospect from the walls of York. The plain is equally level; the soil is naturally more rich; but the drainage and cultivation of the English landscape are wanting. The town once enjoyed a flourishing trade in hemp,—an article which found its way to our dockyards; but this branch of traffic now scarcely exists. The native manufactures of Ferrara have been ruined; and a feeble trade in corn is almost all that is left it. How is this? Is its soil less fertile? Has its natural canal, the Po, dried up? No; but the Government, afraid perhaps that its fields would yield too plenteously, its artizans become too ingenious, and its citizens too wealthy in foreign markets, has laid a heavy duty on its exports, and on every article of home manufacture. Hence the desolate Polesina without, and the extinct forges and empty workshops within, its walls. A city whose manufactures were met with in all the markets of Europe is now dependent for its own supply on the Swiss. The ruin of its trade dates from its annexation to the Papal States. The decay of intelligence has kept pace with that of trade. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Ferrara was one of the lights of Europe: now I know not that there is a single scholar in its university; and its library of eighty thousand volumes and nine hundred manuscripts, among which are the Greek palimpsests of Gregory Nazianzen and Chrysostom, and the manuscripts of Ariosto and Tasso, is becoming, equally with Ariosto's dust, which reposes in its halls, the prey of the worm.

[Pg 215]

I have to thank the papal police at Ponte Lagoscuro for the opportunity of seeing Ferrara; for, with the bad taste which most travellers in Italy display on this head, I had overlooked this town, and booked myself right through to Bologna. I lodged at a fine old hotel, whose spacious apartments left me in no doubt that it had once belonged to some of the princely families of Ferrara. I saw there, however, men who had "a lean and hungry look," and not such as Cæsar wished to have about him,—"fat, sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;" and my suspicions which were awakened at the time have since unfortunately been confirmed, for I read in the newspapers, rather more than a year ago, that the landlord had been shot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[Pg 216]

BOLOGNA AND THE APENNINES.

Road from Ferrara to Bologna—Wayside Oratories—Miserable Cultivation—Barbarism of People—Aspect of Bologna—Streets, Galleries, and Churches of its Interior—Decay of Art—San Petronio—View of Plain from Hill behind Bologna—Tyranny of Government—Night Arrests—Ruinous Taxation—Departure from Bologna—Brigands—The Apennines—Storm among these Mountains—Two Russian Travellers—Dinner at the Tuscan Frontier—Summit of the Pass—Halt for the Night at a Country Inn—The Hostess and her Company—Supper—Resume Journey next Morning—First Sight of Florence.

ON the morrow at ten I took my departure for Bologna. It was sweet to exchange the sickly faces and unnatural silence of the city for the bright sun and the living trees. The road was good,—so very good, that it took me by surprise. It was not in keeping with the surrounding barbarism. Instead of a hard-bottomed, macadamized highway, which traversed the plain in a straight line, bordered by noble trees, I should have expected to find in this region of mouldering towns and neglected fields, a narrow, winding, rutted path, ploughed by torrents and obstructed by boulders; and so, I am sure, I should have done, had any of the native governments of Italy had the making of this road. But it had been designed and executed by Napoleon; and hence its excellence. His roads alone would have immortalized him. They remain, after all his victories have perished, to attest his genius. Would that that genius had been turned to the arts of peace! Conquerors would do well to ponder the eulogium pronounced on a humble tailor who built a bridge out of his savings,—that the world owed more to the scissors of that man than to the sword of some conquerors.

[Pg 217]

Along the road, at short intervals, were little temples, where good Catholics who had a mind might perform their devotions. This reminded me that I was now in Peter's patrimony,—the holy land of Romanism; and where, it was presumed, the wayfarer would catch the spirit of devotion from the soil and air. The hour of prayer might be past,—I know not; but I saw no one in these oratories. Little shrines were perched upon the trees, formed sometimes of boards, at others simply of the cavity of the trunk; while the boughs were bent so as to form a canopy over them. Little images and pictures had been stuck into these shrines; but the rooks,—these black republicans,—like the "reds" at Rome, had waged a war for possession, and, pitching overboard

the little gods that occupied them, were inhabiting in their room. The "great powers" were too busy, or had been so, in the restoration of greater personages, to take up the quarrel of these minor divinities. A strange silence and dreariness brooded over the region. The land seemed keeping its Sabbaths. The fields rested,—the villages were asleep,—the road was untrodden. Had one been dropt from the clouds, he would have concluded that it was but a century or so since the Flood, and that these were the rude primitive great-grandchildren of Noah, who had just found their way into these parts, and were slowly emerging from barbarism. The fields around afforded little indication of such an instrument as the plough; and one would have concluded from the garments of the people, that the loom was among the yet uninvented arts. The harnessings of the horses formed a curiously tangled web of thong, and rope, and thread, twisted, tied, and knotted. It would have puzzled Œdipus himself to discover how a horse could ever be got into such gear, or, being in, how it ever could be got out. There seemed a most extraordinary number of beggars and vagabonds in Peter's patrimony. A little congregation of these worthies waited our arrival at every village, and whined round us for alms so long as we remained. Others, not quite so ragged, stood aloof, regarding us fixedly, as if devising some pretext on which to claim a paul of us. There were worse characters in the neighbourhood, though happily we saw none of them. But at certain intervals we met the Austrian patrol, whose duty it was to clear the road of brigands. Peter, it appeared to us, kept strange company about him,—idlers, beggars, vagabonds, and brigands. It must vex the good man much to find his dear children disgracing him so in the eyes of strangers.

[Pg 218]

These dismal scenes accompanied us half the way. We then entered the Bolognese, and things began to look a little better. Bologna, though under the Papal Government, has long been famous for nourishing a hardy, liberty-loving people, though, if report does them justice, extremely licentious and infidel. Its motto is "*libertas*;" and the air of liberty is favourable, it would seem, to vegetation; for the fields looked greener the moment we had crossed the barrier. Soon we were charmed with the sight of Bologna. Its appearance is indeed imposing, and gives promise of something like life and industry within its walls. A noble cluster of summits,—an offshoot of the Apennines,—rises behind the city, crowned with temples and towers. Within their bosky declivities, from which tall cypress-trees shoot up, lie embowered villas and little watch-towers, with their glittering vanes. At the foot of the hill is spread out the noble city, with its leaning towers and its tall minaret-looking steeples. The approach to the walls reminded me that below these ramparts sleeps Ugo Bassi. I afterwards searched for his resting-place, but could find no one who either would or could show me his tomb. A more eloquent declaimer than even Gavazzi, I have been assured by those who knew him, was silenced when Ugo Bassi fell beneath the murderous fire of the Croat's musket.

[Pg 219]

After the death-like desertion and silence of Ferrara, the feeble bustle of Bologna seemed like a return to the world and its ways. Its streets are lined with covered porticoes, less heavy than those of Padua, but harbouring after nightfall, says the old traveller ARCHENHOLTZ, robbers and murderers, of whom the latter are the more numerous. He accounts for this by saying, that whereas the robber has to make restitution before receiving absolution, the murderer, whether condemned to die or set at liberty, receives full pardon, without the "double labour," as Sir John Falstaff called it, of "paying back." Its hundred churches are vast museums of sculpture and painting. Its university, which the Bolognese boast is the oldest in Europe, rivalled Padua in its glory, and now rivals it in its decay. Its two famous leaning towers,—the rent in the bottom of one is quite visible,—are bending from age, and will one day topple over, and pour a deluge of old bricks upon the adjoining tenements. Its "Academy of the Fine Arts" is, after Rome and Florence, the finest in Italy. It is filled with the works of the Caracci, Domenichino, Guido Albani, and others of almost equal celebrity. I am no judge of such matters; and therefore my reader need lay no stress upon my criticisms; but it appeared to me, that some paintings placed in the first rank had not attained that excellence. The highly-praised "Victory of Sampson over the Philistines," I felt, wanted the grandeur of the Hebrew Judge on this the greatest occasion of his life; although it gave you a very excellent representation of a thirsty man drinking, with rows of prostrate people in the background. Other pieces were disfigured by glaring anachronisms in time and dress. The artist evidently had drawn his inspiration, not from the *Bible*, but from the *Cathedral*. The Apostles in some cases had the faces of monks, and looked as if they had divided their time betwixt Liguori and the wine-flagon. Several Scriptural personages were attired in an ecclesiastical dress, which must have been made by some tailor of the sixteenth century. But there is one picture in that gallery that impressed me more than any other picture I ever saw. It is a painting of the Crucifixion by Guido. The background is a dark thundery mass of cloud, resting angrily above the dimly-seen roofs and towers of Jerusalem. There is "darkness over all the land;" and in the foreground, and relieved by the darkness, stands the cross, with the sufferer. On the left is John, looking up with undying affection. On the right is Mary,—calm, but with eyes full of unutterable sorrow. Mary Magdalene embraces the foot of the cross: her face and upper parts are finely shaded; but her attitude and form are strongly expressive of reverence, affection, and profound grief. There are no details: the piece is simple and great. There are no attempts to produce effect by violent manifestations of grief. Hope is gone, but love remains; and there before you are the parties standing calm and silent, with their great sorrow.

[Pg 220]

It so happened that the exhibition of the works of living artists was open at the time, and I had a good opportunity of comparing the present with the past race of Italian painters. I soon found

[Pg 221]

that the race of Guidos was extinct, and that the pencil of the masters had fallen into the hands of but poor copyists. The present artists of Italy have given over painting saints and Scripture-pieces, and work mostly in portraits and landscapes. They paint, of course, what will sell; and the public taste appears decidedly to have changed. There was a great dearth of good historical, imaginative, and allegorical subjects; too often an attempt was visible to give interest to a piece by an appeal to the baser passions. But the living artists of that country fall below not only their great predecessors, but even the artists of Scotland. This exhibition in Bologna did not by any means equal in excellence or interest the similar exhibition opened every spring in Edinburgh. The statuary displayed only beauty and voluptuousness of form: it wanted the simple energy and the chastened grandeur of expression which characterize the statuary of the ancients, and which have made it the admiration of all ages.

The only god whom the Bolognese worship is San Petronio. His temple, in which Charles V. was crowned by Clement VII., stands in the Piazza Maggiore, the forum of Bologna in the middle ages, and rivals the "Academy" itself in its paintings and sculptures. Though the façade is not finished, nor likely soon to be, it is one of the largest churches in Italy, and is a fine specimen of the Italian Gothic. In a little side chapel is the head of San Petronius himself, certified by Benedict XIV. On the forms on the cathedral floor lie little framed pictures of the saint, with a prayer addressed to him. I saw a country girl enter the church, drop on her knees, kiss the picture, and recite the prayer. I afterwards read this prayer, though not on bended knee; and can certify that a grosser piece of idolatry never polluted human lips. Petronio was addressed by the same titles in which the Almighty is usually approached; as, "the most glorious," "the most merciful."

[Pg 222]

"Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in heaven."

Higher blessings, whether for time or for eternity, than those for which the devotee was directed to supplicate San Petronio, man needs not, and God has not to bestow. Daily bread, protection from danger, grace to love San Petronio, grace to serve San Petronio, pardon, a happy death, deliverance from hell, and eternal felicity in Paradise,—all who offered this prayer,—and other prayer was unheard beneath that roof,—supplicated of San Petronio. The Church of Rome affirms that she does not pray *to the* saints, but *through* them,—namely, as intercessors with Christ and God. This is no justification of the practice, though it were the fact; but it is not the fact. In protestant countries she may insert the name of God at the end of her prayers; but in popish countries she does not deem it needful to observe this formality. The name of Christ and of God rarely occurs in her popular formulas. In the Duomo of Bologna, the only god supplicated,—the only god known,—is San Petronio. The tendency of the worship of the Church of Rome is to efface God from the knowledge and the love of her members. And so completely has this result been realized, that, as one said, "You might steal God from them without their knowing it." Indeed, that "Great and Dreadful Name" might be blotted out from the few prayers of that Church in which it is still retained, and its worship would go on as before. What possible change would take place in the Duomo of San Petronio at Bologna, and in thousands of other churches in Italy, though Rome was to decree in *words*, as she does in *deeds*, that "*there is no God?*"

[Pg 223]

On the second day of my stay at Bologna I ascended the fine hill on the north of the city. A noble pillared arcade of marble, three miles in length, leads up to the summit. At every twelve yards or so is an alcove, with a florid painting of some saint; and at each station sits a poor old woman, who begs an alms of you, in the name of the saint beneath whose picture she spins her thread,—her own thread being nearly ended. There met me here a regiment of little priests, of about an hundred in number, none of whom seemed more than ten years of age, and all of whom wore shoes with buckles, silk stockings, breeches, a loose flowing robe, a white-edged stock, and shovel hat,—in short, miniature priests in dress, in figure, and in everything save their greater sportiveness. On the summit is a magnificent church, containing one of those black madonnas ascribed to Luke, and said to have been brought hither by a hermit from Constantinople in the twelfth century. Be this as it may, the black image serves the Bolognese for an occasion of an annual festival, kept with fully as much hilarity as devotion.

From the summit one looks far and wide over Italy. Below is spread out the plain of Lombardy, level as the sea, and as thickly studded with white villas as the heavens with stars. On the north, the cities of Mantua and Verona, and numerous other towns and villages, are visible. On the east, the towers and cathedral roofs of Ferrara are seen rising above the woods that cover the plain; and the view is bounded by the Adriatic, which, like a thin line of blue, runs along the horizon. On the south and west is the hill country of the Apennines, among whose serrated peaks and cleft sides is many a lovely dell, rich in waters, and vines, and olive trees. The distant country towards the Mediterranean lay engulfed in a white mist. A violent electrical action was going on in it, which, like a strong wind moving upon its surface, raised it into billows, which appeared to sweep onward, tossing and tumbling like the waves of ocean.

[Pg 224]

I had taken up my abode at the Il Pellegrino, one of the best recommended hotels in Bologna,—not knowing that the Austrian officers had made it their head-quarters, and that not a Bolognese would enter it. At dinner-time I saw only the Austrian uniform around the table. This

was a matter of no great moment. Not so what followed. When I went to bed, there commenced overhead a heavy shuffling of feet, and an incessant going and coming, with slamming of doors, and jolting of tables, which lasted all night long. A sad tragedy was enacting above me. The political apprehensions are made over-night in the Italian towns; and I little doubt that the soldiers were all night busily engaged in bringing in prisoners, and sending them off to jail. The persons so arrested are subjected to moral and physical tortures, which speedily prostrate both mind and body, and sometimes terminate in death. Loaded with chains, they are shut up in stinking holes, where they can neither stand upright nor lie down at their length. The heat of the weather and the foul air breed diseases of the skin, and cover them with pustules. The food, too, is scanty, often consisting of only bread and water. The Government strive to keep their cruel condition a secret from their relatives, who, notwithstanding, are able at times to penetrate the mystery that surrounds them, but only to have their feelings lacerated by the thought of the dreadful sufferings undergone by those who are the objects of their tenderest affection. And what agony can be more dreadful than to know that a father, a husband, a son, is rotting in a putrid cell, or being beaten to death by blows, while neither relief nor sympathy from you can reach the sufferer? The case of a young man of the name of Neri, formerly healthy and handsome, found its way to the public prints. Broken down by blows, he was carried to the military hospital in an almost dying condition, where an English physician, in company with an Austrian surgeon, found him with lacerated skin, and the vertebral bones uncovered. He was enduring at the same time so acute pain from inflammation of the bowels, that he was unable, but by hints, to express his misery. It was here that the atrocities of the Papal Nuncio BEDINI were perpetrated,—the same man who was afterwards chased from the soil of America by a storm of execration evoked against him by the friends and countrymen of the victims who had been tortured and shot during his sway in Bologna. In short, the acts of the Holy Office are imitated and renewed; so that numbers, distracted and maddened by the torments which they endure, avow offences which they never committed, and name accomplices whom they never had; and the retractions of these unhappy beings are of no avail to prevent new arrests. The Bolognese are permitted to weep their complicated evils only in secret; to do so openly would be charged as a crime.

[Pg 225]

The fiscal oppression is nearly as unbearable as the political and social. The taxation, both as regards its amount and the mode of enforcing it, is ruinous to the individual, and operates as a fatal check to the progress of industry. The country is eaten up with foreign soldiers. The great hotels in all the principal towns resemble casernes. The reader may judge of my surprise on opening my bed-room door one morning, to find that a couple of Croats had slept on the mat outside of it all night. It might be a special mark of honour to myself; but I rather think that they are accustomed to bivouac in the passages and lobbies. The eternal drumming in the streets is enough to deafen one for life. To the traveller it is sufficiently annoying; how much more so to the Bolognese, who knows that that is music for which he must pay dear! Since 1848, the aggregate of taxation between Leghorn and Ancona has been increased about 40 per cent.; and the taxes are levied upon a principle of arbitrary assessment which compels the rich to simulate poverty, as in Turkey, lest they should be stripped of their last farthing. In Bologna, the payments of the house and land tax, which used to be made every two months, are now collected for the same sums every seven weeks; and a per centage is added at the pleasure of the Government, of which no one knows the amount till the collector calls with his demand. In other towns an income-tax is levied upon trades and professions, framed upon no rule but the supposed capabilities of the individual assessed to pay. Bologna, I may note, although in the Papal States, is now quite an Austrian town. The Austrians have there six-and-twenty pieces of artillery, and are building extensive barracks for cavalry and infantry. Bologna belongs to that part of the Papal States called the Four Legations, where, whether it pleases the Pope to be so protected or not, it is now quite understood that the Austrians have come to stay. The officer in command at Bologna styles himself its civil as well as military governor.

[Pg 226]

On the third day after my arrival, I started at four of the morning for Florence. It was dark as we rode through the streets of Bologna; and our *diligence*, piled a-top with luggage, smashed several of the oil-lamps, which dangled on cords at a dangerous proximity to the causeway. I don't know that the Bolognese would miss them, for we left the street very little, if at all, darker than we found it. I looked forward with no little interest to the day's ride, which was to lie among the dells of the Apennines, and to terminate at eve with the fair sight of the Queen of the Arno. How unlike the reality, will appear in the sequel. In half an hour we came in the dim light to a little valley, where the village bell was sweetly chiming the matins. I note the spot because I narrowly missed being an actor in a tragedy which took place here the very next morning. I may tell the story now, though I anticipate somewhat. I was sitting at the table d'hote in Florence three days after, when the gentleman on my right began to tell the company how he had travelled from Bologna on the Saturday previous, and how he and all his fellow-passengers had been robbed on the way. They had got to the spot I have indicated, when suddenly a little band of brigands, which lay in ambush by the wayside, rushed on the *diligence*. Some mounted on the front, and attended to the outside passengers; others took charge of those in the *interieur*. Now it was, when the passengers saw into what hands they had fallen, that nothing was heard but groaning in all parts of the *diligence*. Our informant, who sat next the window in the *interieur*, was seized by the collar, a long knife was held to his breast, and he was admonished to use all diligence in making over to his new acquaintance any worldly goods he had about him. He had to part with his gold watch and chain, his breast-pin, and sundry other articles of jewellery; but his

[Pg 227]

purse and sovereigns he contrived to drop among the straw at the bottom of the vehicle. All the rest fared as he did, and some of them worse, for they lost their money as well as jewels. These grave proceedings were diversified by a somewhat humorous incident. The coachman had providently put his dinner in the form of a sausage, rolled in brown paper, under his seat. This is the form in which Austrian zwanzigers are commonly made up; and the brigands, fancying the coachman's sausage to be a roll of silver zwanzigers, seized on it with avidity, and bore it off in triumph. They were proceeding to rifle the baggage, when, hearing the horse-patrol approaching, they plunged into the thicket as suddenly as they had appeared. The morning chimes were sounding, as on the previous day, while this operation was going on. But what is not a little extraordinary is, that all this took place within two miles of the city gates of Bologna, where there could not be fewer than twelve thousand Austrian soldiers. But these, I presume, were too much engaged on this, as on previous nights, in apprehending and imprisoning the citizens in the Pope's behalf, to think of looking after brigands. In Peter's privileged patrimony one may rob, murder, and break every command of the decalogue, and defy the police, provided he obey the Church. Were I to travel that road again, I would provide myself with a tinsel watch and appendages, and a sausage carefully rolled up in paper, to avoid the unpleasantness of meeting such wellwishers empty-handed.

[Pg 228]

In another half hour we came to the spurs of the Apennines. The day was breaking, and its light, I hoped, would lay open many a sweet dell and many a romantic peak, before evening. These hopes, as, alas! too often happens in the longer journey of life, were to be suddenly dashed. I felt a warm, suffocating current of air breathing over the valley, and looked up to see the furnace whence, as I supposed, it proceeded. This was the sirocco, the herald of the tempest that soon thereafter burst upon us. Masses of whitish cloud came rolling over the summits of the hills; furious gusts came down upon us from the heights; and in a few minutes we found ourselves contending with a hurricane such as I have never seen equalled save on one other occasion. The cloud became fearfully black, and made the lightning the more awful as it touched with fire the peaks around us, and bathed in an ocean of flame the vines and hamlets on the hill-side. Terrible peals of thunder broke over us; and these were followed by torrents of rain, which the furious winds dashed against our vehicle with the force and noise of a cataract. We had to make our way up the mountain's side in the face of this tempest. At times more than a dozen animals were yoked to our *diligence*,—horses, oxen, and beasts of every kind which we could press into the service; while half-a-dozen postilions, shouting and cracking their whips, strove to urge the motley cavalcade onward. Still we crept up only by inches. The road in most cases wound over the very peak of the mountain; and there the tempest, rushing upon us from all sides at once, threatened to lay our vehicle, which shook and quivered in the blast, flat on its side, or toss it into the valley below. The storm continued to rage with unabated violence from day-break till mid-day; and, by favour of horses, bullocks, and postilions, we kept moving on at the rate of two miles an hour, now climbing, now descending, well knowing that at every summit a fresh buffeting awaited us.

[Pg 229]

I had as my companions on this journey, two Russian gentlemen, with whom afterwards, at several points of my tour, I came into contact. They were urbane and intelligent men, full of their own country and of the Czar, yet professing great respect for England, which they had just visited, and looking down with a contempt they were at little pains to conceal, upon the Frenchmen and Italians among whom they were moving. They possessed the sobriety of mind, the turn for quiet, shrewd observation, in short, much of the physical and intellectual stamina, of Englishmen, with just a shade less of the exquisite polish which marks the latter wherever they are met with. These, no doubt, were favourable specimens of the Russian nation; but it is such men who give the tone to a State, while the masses below execute their designs. I have ever since felt that, should we ever meet that people on the field of battle, the contest would be no ordinary one. I recollect one of these gentlemen meeting me on the streets of Rome some weeks afterwards, and informing me that he had been the day before to visit the ball on the top of St Peter's, and that he had been delighted at seeing his Emperor's name, in his Emperor's own handwriting, inside the ball, with a few lines beneath the signature, stating that he had stood in that ball, and had there prayed for Mother Holy Russia,—a fact full of significance.

[Pg 230]

About mid-day we came, wet, and weary, and cold, to the Duana on the Tuscan frontier, where was a poor inn, at which, after our passports had been viséed, and our trunks and carpet-bags plumbed, we dined. There were some twenty of us at table; a priest taking the top, and the *conducteur* the bottom. I remember that two persons of the party kept their hats on at table, and that these were the priest and a poor country lad,—the priest because he presided perhaps, and the countryman because, not knowing the etiquette of the point, he wisely determined to follow in that, as in greater matters, the priest. Our dinner consisted of coarse broth, black bread, buffalo beef, and wine of not the sweetest flavour; but what helped us was an excellent appetite, for we had not breakfasted beyond a few chestnuts and grapes picked up at the poor villages through which we passed. We obtained, however, an hour's shelter from the elements.

We resumed our journey, and in about an hour's ride we gained the central chain of the Apennines. Happily the tempest had moderated somewhat; for this, lying midway between the two seas, is ordinarily the stormiest point of the pass. We crossed it, however, with less inconvenience than we had looked for. The summits, which had hitherto been conical, with vines

[Pg 231]

straggling up their sides, now became rounded, or ran off in serrated lines, with sides scarred with tempests and strewn with stones. The scenery was bleak and desolate, as that of the Grampian pass leading by Spittal of Glenshee to Dee-side. But as we continued our descent, the richly wooded glens returned; the clouds rose; and at one time I ventured to hope that I should yet have my first sight of Florence under a golden sky, and that Milton's description might, after all, be applicable to this day of storms:—

"As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the low'ring element
Scowls o'er the darken'd landskip snow or shower;
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings."

But the hope was short-lived: no Florence was I to see that night; nor was note of bird to gladden the dells. The mists again fell, and hid in premature night those fine valleys, so famous in Florentine history, which we were now approaching. We wound round hills, traversed deep ravines, heard on every side the thunder of the swollen torrents, and, when the parting vapour permitted, had glimpses of the luxuriant woods of myrtle and laurel that clothe these valleys,—

"Where round some mouldering tower pale ivy creeps,
And low-brow'd rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps."

At last we found ourselves on the banks of a broad and swollen river,—the Save,—with no means of transit save a dismantled bridge, so sorely shattered by the flood, that it was an even question whether our vehicle might not, like the last straw on the dromedary's back, sink the structure outright.

[Pg 232]

We dismounted, and, by the help of lights, measured first the bridge, and next the *diligence*, and found that the breadth of the former exceeded that of the latter by just two inches. The passengers passed on foot; the *diligence*, with the baggage, came after; and so all arrived safely on the other side. Our first care was to assemble a council of war in the poor inn which stood on the spot, and deliberate what next to do.

The *conducteur* opened the debate. "We had," he said, "twenty miles of road still before us; the way lay through deep ravines, and over torrents which the rains must have rendered impassable: it would be long past midnight till we should reach Florence,—if we should ever reach it: his opinion was, therefore, that we ought to stay where we were; nevertheless, if we insisted, he would go on at all risks." So counselled our leader; and if we wanted an argument on the other side, we had only to look around. The walls of the inn were naked and black; the floor was covered inch-deep with slime, the deposit of the flood which had that day broke into the dwelling; and the place was evidently unequal to the "entertainment" of such a number of "men and horses" as had thus unexpectedly been thrown upon it. It is not wonderful, in these circumstances, that a small opposition party sprung up, headed by an English lady, whose delicate slippers were never made for such a floor as that on which she now stood. She could see no danger in going on, and urged us to set forward. Better counsels prevailed, however; and we resolved to endure the evils we knew, rather than adventure on those we knew not.

The next matter to be negotiated was supper, of which the aspect of the place gave no great promise. The landlady was a thin, wiry, black, voluble Tuscan. "Have you beef?—Have you cheese?—Have you macaroni?"—inquired several voices in succession. "Oh, she had all these, and a great many dainties besides, in the morning; but the flood,—the flood!" The same flood, however, which had swept off our hostess's larder, had swept in a great deal of good company, and she was evidently resolved on setting the one evil over against the other. She now showered upon us a long, rapid, and vehement address; and he who has not heard the Tuscan discourse does not know what volubility is. "What does she say?" I inquired at one of my two Russian friends. "She says very many words," he replied, "but the meaning is moneys, moneys." "Have you any coffee?" I asked. "Oh, coffee! delightful coffee; but it had gone sailing down the flood." "And it carried off the eggs too, I suppose?" "No; I have eggs." We resolved to sup on eggs. A fire of logs was kindled up stairs, and a table was extemporized out of some deals. In a quarter of an hour in came our supper,—black bread, fried eggs, and a skein of wine. We fell to; but, alack! what from the smut of the chimney and the dust of the pan, the eggs were done in the *chiaro scuro* style; the wine had so villanous a twang, that a few sips of it contented me; and the bread, black as it was, was the only thing palatable. I got the landlady persuaded to boil me an egg; and though the Italian peasants only dip their eggs in hot water, and serve them up raw, it was preferable to the conglomerate of the pan. We made merry, however, over our poor meal and the grateful warmth of the fire; and somewhere towards midnight we entertained the question of going to bed. We had avoided the topic as long as possible, from a foreboding that our hostess would present us with some rueful tale of blankets lost in the flood. Besides, we were not without misgivings that, should the clouds return and the river rise as before, house and all might follow the other things down the stream, and no one could tell where we might find ourselves on awakening. On broaching the subject, however, we found to our delight, that cribs, couches,

[Pg 233]

[Pg 234]

shakedown, and all sorts of contrivances, with store of cloaks, garments, and blankets, had been got ready for our use.

We were told off into parties; and the first to be sorted were the two Russians, an Italian, and myself. We four were shown into a room, which, to our great surprise, contained two excellent four-posted beds, one of which was allotted to the two Russian gentlemen, and the other to the Italian and myself. Our mode of turning in was somewhat novel. The Russians put away simply their greatcoats, and lay down beneath the coverlet. My bed-fellow the Italian took up a position for the night by throwing himself, as he was, on the top of the bed-clothes. Not approving of either mode, I slipped off both greatcoat and coat, and, covering myself with the blankets, soon forgot in sleep all the mishaps of the day.

The voice of the *conducteur* shouting at the door of our apartment awakened us before day-break. Our company mustered with what haste they could, and we again betook us to the road,

"While the still morn went out with sandals gray."

The path lay along the banks of the torrent Carza, and the valley we found frightfully scarred by the flood of the former day. Fierce torrents rushing from the hills had torn the fences, ploughed up the road, piled up hillocks of mud among the vineyards, and covered with barren sand, or strewn with stones, many an acre of fine meadow. Had we attempted the path in the darkness, our course must have found a speedy termination. At length, ascending a steep hill, we found ourselves overlooking the valley of the Arno.

[Pg 235]

Every traveller taxes his descriptive powers to the utmost to paint the view from this hill-top; and I verily believe that, seen under a cloudless sky, it is one of the most enchanting landscapes in the world. The numberless conical hills,—the white villas and villages, which lie as thick as if the soil had produced them,—the silvery stream of the Arno,—the rich chestnut and olive woods,—the domes of the Italian Athens,—the songs,—the fragrance,—and the great wall of the Apennines bounding all,—must present a picture of rare magnificence. But I saw it under different conditions, and must needs describe it as it appeared.

Sub-Apennine Italy was before me, and it seemed the Italy I had dreamed of, could I only see it; but, alas! it was blotted with mists, and overshadowed by a black canopy of cloud. Outspread, far as the eye could extend southward, was a landscape of ridges and conical tops, separated by winding wreaths of white mist, giving to the country the aspect of an ocean broken up into creeks, and bays, and channels, with no end of islands. The hills were covered to their very summits with the richest vegetation; and the multitude of villages sprinkled over them lent them an air of great animation. The great chain of the Apennines, with rolling masses of cloud on its summits, ran along on the east, and formed the bounding wall of the prospect. Below us there floated on the surface of the mist an immense dome, looking like a balloon of huge size about to ascend into the air. It did not ascend, however; but, surrounded by several tall shafts and towers which rose silently out of the mist, it remained suspended over the same spot. Like a buoy at sea affixed to the place where some noble vessel lies entombed, this dome told us that engulfed in this ocean of vapour lay FLORENCE, with her rich treasures of art, and her many stirring recollections and traditions.

[Pg 236]

CHAPTER XIX.

[Pg 237]

FLORENCE AND ITS YOUNG EVANGELISM.

Beauty of Position—Focus of Italian Art—Education on the Æsthetic Principle—Effects as shown in the Character and Manners of the Florentines—The result not Civilization, but Barbarism—The Artizans of Britain surpass the Florentines in Civilization—Early English Scholars at Florence—Man's Power for Good—Savonarolo—History of present Religious Movement in Tuscany—Condition of Tuscan Government and Priesthood prior to 1848—Attempts to introduce Religious Books—The Priests compel the Government to interfere—The Revolution of 1848—The Bible translated and seized—Visit of Vaudois Pastors—Secret Religious Press—Work now carried on by the Converts—Denunciation of DEATH for Bible Reading—Great Increase of Converts notwithstanding—Present State and Prospects of Movement—Leave Florence—Beauty of the Vale of the Arno—Pisa—Arrive at Leghorn.

OF Florence "the Beautiful," I must say that its beauty appeared scarce equal to its fame. In an age when the capitals of northern Europe were of wood, the Queen of the Arno may have been without a rival on the north of the Alps; but now finer streets, handsomer squares, and nobler façades, may be seen in any of our second-rate towns. But its dome, by Brunelleschi, the largest in the world,—its tall campanile,—its baptistry, with its beautiful gates,—and its public statuary,—are worthy of all admiration. Its environs are superb.

Florence is sweetly embosomed in an amphitheatre of mountains, of the most lovely forms and the richest and brightest colouring. Castles and convents crown their summits; while their slopes display the pillar-like cypress, the gray olive, the festooned vine, with a multitude of embowered

[Pg 238]

villas. On the north-east, right in the fork of the Apennines, lie the bosky and wooded dells of Valombrosa. On the north, seated on a pyramidal hill, is the ancient Fiesole, which the genius of Milton has touched and immortalized. On the west are the spacious lawns and parks of the Grand Duke; while the noble valley runs off to the south-west, carpeted with vines, or covered with chestnut woods, with the Arno stealing silently through it in long reaches to the sea. During my stay, the girdling Apennines were tipped with the snows of winter; and when the sun shone out, they formed a gleaming circlet around the green valley, like a ring of silver enclosing an enormous emerald. I saw the sun but seldom, however. The bad weather which had overtaken me amid the Apennines descended with me into the valley of the Arno; and murky clouds, with torrents of rain, but too often obscured the sky. But I could fancy the delicious beauty of a summer eve in Florence, with the still balmy air enwrapping the purple hills, the tall cypresses, the domes, and the gently stealing waters. In spring the region must be a very paradise. Indeed, spring is seldom absent from the banks of the Arno; for though at times savage Winter is heard growling amid the Apennines, he dare seldom venture farther than midway down their slopes.

I cannot recall the past glories of Florence, or even touch on Cosmo's "immortal century;" I cannot speak of its galleries, so rich in painting, so unrivalled in statuary; nor can I enter its Pitti palace, with its hanging gardens; or the city churches, with their store of frescoes and paintings; or its Santa Crocé, with its six mighty tombs,—those even of Dante, Galileo, Machiavelli, Michael Angelo, Alfieri, Leonardo Aretino. The size of Florence brings all these objects within a manageable distance; and, during my stay of well-nigh a week, I visited them, as any one may do, almost every day. But every traveller has entered largely into their description, and I pass them over, to touch on other things more rarely brought into view.

[Pg 239]

Florence is the focus of Italian art; and here, if anywhere, one can see the effect of educating a population solely on the æsthetic principle. The Florentines have no books, no reading-rooms, no public lectures, no preaching in their churches even, bating the occasional harangue of a monk. They are left to be trained solely by fine pictures and lovely statues. From these they are expected to learn their duties as men and as citizens. The sole employment of the people is to produce these things; their sole study, to be able to admire them. The result is not civilization, but barbarism. Nor can it well be otherwise. We find the "beautiful" abundantly in nature, but never dissociated from the "useful;" teaching us that it cannot be safely sought but in union with what is true and good; and that we cannot make it "an end" without reversing the whole constitution of our nature. When a people make the love of "the beautiful" their predominant passion, they rapidly decline in the better and nobler qualities. The beautiful yields only enjoyment; and those who live only to enjoy soon become intensely selfish. That enjoyment, moreover, is immediate, and so affords no room for the exercise of patience and foresight. A race of triflers arise, who think only of the present hour. They are wholly undisciplined in the higher qualities of mind,—in perseverance and self-control; and, being withdrawn from the contemplation of facts and principles, they become incapable of attending to the useful duties of life, and are wholly unable to rise to the higher efforts of virtue and patriotism. The Italian Governments, for their own ends, have restricted their subjects to the fine arts, but at the expense of the trade, the agriculture, and the civilization, of their dominions. The fabric of British power was not raised on the æsthetic principle. Take away our books, and give us pictures; shut up our schools and churches, and give us museums and galleries; instead of our looms and forges, substitute chisels and pencils; and farewell to our greatness. The artizan of Birmingham or Glasgow is a more civilised man than the same class in the Italian cities. His dwelling, too, displays an amount of comfort and elegance which few in Italy below the rank of princes, and not always they, can command. The condition of the Italian people shows conclusively that the predominating study of "the beautiful" has a most corrupting and enfeebling effect. In fact, their pictures have paved the way for their tyrants; and when one marks their demoralizing effects, he feels how salutary is the restriction of the Decalogue against their use in Divine worship. If pictures and images lead to idolatry in the Church, their exclusive study as infallibly produces serfdom in the State.

[Pg 240]

In the early dawn of the Reformation, several of our own countrymen visited the city of the Medici, that they might have access to the works of antiquity which Cosmo had collected, and enjoy the converse of the learned men that thronged his palace. "William Selling," says D'Aubigné, "a young English ecclesiastic, afterwards distinguished at Canterbury by his zeal in collecting valuable manuscripts,—his fellow-countrymen, Grocyn, Lilly, and Latimer, 'more bashful than a maiden,'—and, above all, Linacre, whom Erasmus ranked above all the scholars of Italy,—used to meet in the delicious villa of the Medici, with Politian, Chalcondyles, and other men of learning; and there, in the calm evenings of summer, under that glorious Tuscan sky, they dreamt romantic visions of the Platonic philosophy. When they returned to England, these learned men laid before the youth of Oxford the marvellous treasures of the Greek language." We are repaying the debt, by sending to that land a better philosophy than any these learned men ever brought from it. This leads us to speak of the religious movement in progress in Tuscany.

[Pg 241]

After all, man's power for evil is extremely limited. The very opposite is the ordinary estimate. When we mark the career of a conqueror like Napoleon, or the withering effects of an organization like that of Rome, and compare these with the feeble results of a preacher like Savonarola, whose body the fire reduced to ashes, and whose disciples persecution speedily

scattered, we say that man's power to destroy his species is almost omnipotent,—his power to benefit them scarce appreciable. But spread out the long cycles of history and the long ages of the world, and you learn that the triumphs of evil, though sudden, are temporary, and those of truth slow but eternal. A true word spoken by a single man has in it more power than armies, and will, in the long run, do more to bless than all that tyrannies can do to blight mankind. Savonarola, feeble as he seemed, and unprotected as he was, wielded a power greater than that of Rome. The truths sown by the preacher on the banks of the Arno so many centuries ago are not yet dead. They are springing up; and, long after Rome shall have passed away, they will be a source of liberty, of civilization, of arts, and of eternal life, to his countrymen.

A political storm heralded the quiet spring-time of evangelical truth which has of late blessed that land. Prior to 1848, although there had been no change for the better in the law, a very considerable degree of practical liberty was enjoyed by the subjects of Tuscany. The Tuscans are naturally a quiet, well-behaved people; the Grand Duke was an easy, kind-hearted man; his Government was exceedingly mild; and, as he conducted himself towards his people like a father, he was greatly beloved by them. Tuscany at that period was universally acknowledged to be the happiest province of Italy.

[Pg 242]

The priesthood of those days were a good-natured, easy set of men also. They had never known opposition. They could not imagine the possibility of anything occurring to endanger their power, and therefore were exceedingly tolerant in the exercise of it. They were an illiterate and ill-informed race. An Abbatte of their own number assured Dr Stewart, so far back as 1845, that there was not one amongst them, from the Archbishop downwards, who could read Hebrew, nor half-a-dozen who could be found among the upper orders who could read Greek. They were masters of as much Latin as enabled them to get through the mass; but they were wholly unskilled in the modern tongues of Europe, and entire strangers to modern European literature. Though poorly paid, they durst not eke out their means of subsistence by entering into any trade. Many of them were fain to become major domos in rich families, and might be seen chaffering in the markets in the public piazza, and weighing out flour, coffee, and oil to the servants at home. No priest can say more than one mass a-day; and for that he is paid one lira, or eightpence sterling.

Such being the state of matters, little notice was taken of what foreign Protestants might be doing. The priests were secure in their ignorance, and deemed it impossible that any attempt would be made to introduce the diabolical heresies of Luther among their orthodox flocks. Indeed, these flocks were removed almost beyond the reach of contamination, not so much by the vigilance of the priests, as by their own ignorance and bigotry. The degree of popular enlightenment may be judged of from the following circumstance which happened to Dr Stewart, and of which the Doctor himself assured me. Soon after his first coming into Tuscany in 1845, he came into contact with a countryman, who, on being told that he was a Protestant minister, began instantly to scrutinize his lower extremities, to ascertain whether he had cloven hoofs. The priests had told the people that Protestants were just devils in disguise.

[Pg 243]

The Government, I have said, was a mild one. It was more: it was affected with the usual Italian sluggishness and indolence,—the *dolce far niente*; and accordingly it winked at innumerable ongoingings, so long as these did not attract public attention. Bibles and religious Protestant works were introduced secretly, the Government knowing it, but winking at it, as the Church did not complain. The arrest of the deputation from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the Holy Land in 1839 was an exception to what I have now stated, but such an exception as confirms the general statement. The deputation, with the ignorance of us Britishers abroad for the first time, imagined that because Leghorn was a free port, they were free to give away Bibles, tracts, and all kinds of religious books; and accordingly they made vigorous use of their time. Scarcely had they stepped on shore when they commenced a liberal distribution of Bibles, books on the "Evidences," and other valuable works, among the boatmen, *facchini*, and beggars. It did not occur to them, that of those to whom they gave these books, few could read, and none were able to appreciate them. Many persons who received these books carried them to the priests, who, confounded at the suddenness as well as the boldness of the assault, carried them to the police, and the police to the Government; and before the deputation had been an hour and a half in Thomson's hotel, they were under arrest. It was the Church which compelled the Government to interfere; and it is the Church which is now driving forward the civil power in its mad career of persecution. As a proof that we bring no heavier charge against the priests than they deserve, we may mention, that in 1849 Dr Stewart was summoned to appear before the delegate of Government, to answer for having allowed one or two Italian Protestant ministers to preach in his pulpit. The delegate informed him that the Government was not taking this step of its own accord, but that the Archbishop of Florence was compelling the Government to put the law in force, and that the Archbishop was the prosecutor in the case.

[Pg 244]

The old statute of Ferdinand I., which allows to foreigners the full exercise of their religion within the city of Leghorn, was taken advantage of to open the Scotch church there. This was in 1845. It was two years after this,—in the winter of 1847-48,—that the religious movement first developed itself,—full six months before the revolutions and changes of 1848. The work was at first confined almost entirely to a handful of foreigners—Captain Pakenham; M. Paul, a Frenchman, and the Swiss pastor in Florence;— at—; and Mr Thomson, Vice-Consul at

Leghorn. Count Guicciardini was the only Florentine connected with the movement. It was resolved to print and circulate such books as were likely to pass the censorship, and might be openly sold by all booksellers. The censor of that day was a remarkably liberal man, and he gave his consent very willingly. Five or six little volumes were printed in that country; but the people were not yet prepared for such a step; the books lay unsold, and were got into circulation only by being given away as presents. But the very fact that the friends of the movement had been able to print and publish such works openly at Florence, with the approbation of the censor, greatly encouraged them. It was next proposed to attempt to get the censor's approbation to an edition of the New Testament; and the work was before him waiting his imprimatur, when the revolutions of 1848 broke over Italy with the suddenness of one of its own thunder-storms.

[Pg 245]

I cannot go particularly into the changes that followed, and which are known to my readers through other sources,—the flight of the Grand Duke,—the new Tuscan Constitution,—the free press. The political for a time buried the religious. Captain Pakenham, taking advantage of the liberty enjoyed under the republic, commenced printing an edition of Martini's Bible (the Romanist version), believing that it would be more acceptable than Diodati's (the Protestant version). Before he had got the book put into circulation, the re-action commenced, the Grand Duke returned, and the work was seized. When engaged in making the seizure, the gendarmes pressed a young apprentice printer to tell them whether there were any more copies concealed. The lad replied that he had only one suggestion to offer, which was, that, now they had seized the book, they should seize the author too. And who is he? eagerly inquired the gendarmes, preparing to start on the chase. Jesus Christ, was the lad's reply.

Meanwhile the revolution had greatly enlarged the privileges of the Waldensian Church in Piedmont, and three of her pastors, MM. Malan, Meille, and Geymonat, arrived in Florence in the winter of 1848-49, for the purpose of making themselves more familiar with the tongue and accent of the Tuscans, in order to be able to avail themselves of the greater openings of usefulness now presented to them, both in their own country and in central Italy.

[Pg 246]

They preached occasionally, and attended the prayer-meeting, which now greatly increased, and which was the only one at this time among the Florentines. Having by their visit helped forward the good work, these evangelists, after a six months' stay in Florence, returned to their own country.

A full year elapsed between the departure of the Waldensian brethren and the movement among the Florentines to obtain an Italian pastor. After much deliberation they resolved on this step, and in May 1850 a deputation set out for the Valleys, which, arriving at La Tour, prevailed on Professor Malan to accept of the charge at Florence. M. Malan returned to that city, and, on the 1st of July 1850, began his ministry, among a little flock of thirty persons, in the Swiss chapel Via del Seraglio, in which the Grisons had a right to Italian service. The work now went rapidly forward. Formerly there had been but one re-union; now there were ten in Florence alone, besides others in the towns and villages adjoining. M. Malan had service once a fortnight in Italian; and so large was the attendance, that the chapel, which holds four hundred, was crowded to the door with Florentine converts or inquirers. The priests took the alarm. They wrought upon the mind of the deformed Archduchess,—a great bigot, and sister to the Grand Duke. A likely tool she was; for she had made a pilgrimage to Rimini, and offered on the shrine of the winking Madonna a diamond tiara and bracelet. The result I need not state. The immediate result was, that the Italian service was put a stop to in January 1851; and the final result was the banishment of Malan and Geymonat from Tuscany in the May of that year,—the expulsion of the pastors being accompanied with circumstances of needless severity and ignominy. Geymonat, after lying two days in the Bargello of Florence, was brought forth and conducted on foot by gendarmes, chained like an assassin, to the Piedmontese frontier. On this miserable journey he was thrust every night into the common prison, along with characters of the worst description, whose blasphemies he was compelled to hear. The foul air and the disgusting food of these places made him sometimes despair of coming out alive; but he had his recompense in the opportunities which he thus enjoyed of preaching the gospel to the gendarmes by the way, and to the keepers of the prisons, some of whom heard him gladly.

[Pg 247]

The departure of the Vaudois pastors threw the work into the hands of the native converts, by whom it has been carried on ever since. It is to be feared that, in the absence of pastors, not a little that is political is mixed with the religious. It is difficult forming an estimate of the numbers of the converts and inquirers. They have meetings in all the towns of Tuscany and Lucca, between whom a constant intercourse is maintained. Each member subscribes two crazzia a-week for the purchase of Protestant religious books. To supply these books, two presses are at work,—one in Turin, the other in Florence. The latter is a secret press, which the police, with all their efforts, have not been able to this day to discover. The Bible can be got into Tuscany with great difficulty; yet the demand for it is greater than ever. The converts have been tried by every mode of persecution short of death; yet their numbers grow. The prisons are full with political and religious offenders; yet fresh arrests continually take place in Florence.

The first and more notable instance of persecution on which the Government of Tuscany ventured, after the banishment of Count Guicciardini and his companions, was the imprisonment of Francesco and Rosa Madiai, for reading the Word of God in the Italian language. The

[Pg 248]

sufferings of these confessors turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel. The attention of many of their own countrymen was drawn to the cause of their sufferings; and the bigotry of the Grand Duke, or rather of the Court of Rome, with which the Tuscan Government had entered into a concordat for the suppression of heresy, was proclaimed before all Europe. A Protestant deputation visited Florence to intercede in behalf of these confessors; but their plea found so little favour with the Grand Duke, that he immediately issued a decree, reviving an old law which makes all offences against the religion of the State punishable *by death*. To provide for carrying the decree into effect, a guillotine was imported from Lucca, and an executioner was hired at a salary of ten pounds a month. As if this were not sufficiently explicit, the Grand Duke told his subjects that he was "*determined to root out Protestantism from his State, though he should be handed down to posterity as a monster of cruelty.*" Neither the spectacle of the guillotine nor the terrible threat of the Grand Duke could arrest the progress of the good work. The Bible was sought after, and read in secret; and the numbers who left the communion of the Romish Church grew and multiplied daily. In the beginning of 1853, the Protestants, or Evangelicals as they prefer to call themselves in Tuscany, were estimated at many thousands. I doubt not that this estimate was correct, if viewed as including all who had separated their interests from the Church of Rome; but I just as little doubt that a majority of these, if brought to the test, rather than suffer would have denied the Gospel. Many of them knew it only as a political badge, not as a *new life*. But, on the judgment of those who had the best means of knowing, there were at least *a thousand* in Tuscany who had undergone a change of heart, and were prepared to confess Christ on the scaffold. To hunt out these peaceful ones, and bring them to punishment, is the grand object of the priesthood; and in the confessional they have an instrumentality ready-made for the purpose. Taking advantage of the greater timidity of the female mind, it has become a leading question with the confessor, "Does your husband read the Bible? Has he political papers?" Alas! according to the ancient prophecy, the brother delivers up the brother to death. I heard of some affecting cases of this sort when I was in Florence. Of the fifty persons, or thereabouts, who were then in prison on religious grounds, not a few had been accused by their own relatives, the accusation being extorted by the threat of withholding absolution. At the beginning of the English Reformation, with an infernal refinement of cruelty, children were often compelled to light the faggots which were to consume their parents; and in Tuscany at this hour, the trembling wife is compelled, by the threat of eternal damnation, to disclose the secret which is to consign the husband to a dungeon. The police are never far from the confessor's box, and wait only the signal from it, what house to visit, and whom to drag to prison. As with us in former days, the Bible is secreted in the most unlikely places; it is read at the dead hour of night; and the prayers and praises that follow are offered in whispering accents,—for fear of the priests and the guillotine.

[Pg 249]

Every subsidiary agency that might further the progress of the truth has been suppressed by the Government. All the liberal papers have been put down. They appeared again and again under new names, but only to encounter, under every form, the veto of the authorities. At last their whole printing establishments were confiscated. The public press having been silenced, the secret one continued to speak to the Tuscans from its hiding-place; and its voice was the more heard that the other was dumb. Besides Bibles, a variety of religious books have issued from it, and have been widely circulated. Among the translated works spread among the Tuscans are D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation," M'Crie's "Suppression of the Reformation in Italy," "The Mother's Catechism," Watts' "Catechism," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and a variety of religious tracts. The prohibition of a book by the Government is sure to be followed by a universal demand for it; and the Government decree is thus the signal for going to press with a new edition of the forbidden work. Mr Gladstone's letters on Naples were prohibited by Government; and the very means adopted to keep the Tuscans ignorant of what Englishmen thought of the state of Naples, and of the Continent generally, only led to its being better known. Though not a single copy of these letters was to be seen in the shops or on the stalls, they found their way into every one's hands. The same thing happened to Count Guicciardini. The Government prohibited his statement, and all Florence read it. The well-known hatred of the priests to the Bible has been its best recommendation in the eyes of the Tuscans. Thus the Government finds that it cannot move a step without inflicting deadly damage on its own interests. Its interposition is fatal only to the cause it seeks to help. To prohibit a book is to publish it; to bring a man to trial is to give liberty an opportunity of speaking through his advocate; to cast a confessor of the Lord Jesus into prison is but to erect a light-house amidst the Tuscan darkness. The Government and the priesthood find that their efforts are foiled and their might paralyzed by a mysterious power, which they know not how to grapple with. The guillotine has stood unused: not that any scruples of conscience or any feelings of humanity restrain the priests; fain would they bring every convert to the scaffold if they dared; but the odium which they well know would attend such a deed deters them; and they anxiously wait the coming of a time when it may be safe to do what could not be done at present but at the risk of damaging, and perhaps ruining, their cause. It does not follow that the Tuscan priesthood have not the guilt of blood to answer for. If the confessors of the Gospel in that land are not perishing by the guillotine, they are pining in prisons, and sinking into the grave, by reason of the choking stench, the disgusting vermin, and the insufficient food, to which they are exposed.

[Pg 250]

[Pg 251]

But the condition of these victims, perishing unknown and unpitied in the fangs of an ecclesiastical tyranny, is not the most distressing spectacle which Tuscany at this hour presents.

Theirs is an enviable state, compared with that of the great body of the people. These occupy but a larger prison, and groan in yet stronger fetters; while their captivity is uncheered by any such hope as that which sustains the Tuscan confessors of the truth. Mistrust of their Church is widely spread in the country. There is no religion in Tuscany. There is as little morality. The marriage vow is but little regarded, and the seducer boasts of his triumphs over married chastity, as if they were praiseworthy deeds. Thousands have plunged into atheism. Of those who have not gone this length, the great body are dissatisfied, ill at ease, without confidence in the doctrines of Rome, but ignorant of a more excellent way. Straitly shut up, they grope blindfolded round the walls of their prison-house, wistfully turning their eyes to any ray of light that strikes in through its crevices. How this state of things may end is known only to God;—whether in the gradual spread of Gospel light, and the peaceful fall of that system which has so long enthralled the intellect and soul of the Tuscans; or whether, as a result of the growing exasperation and deepening horrors of these bondsmen, they may give a violent wrench to the pillars of the ecclesiastical and social fabric, and pull it down upon the heads of themselves and their oppressors.

[Pg 252]

I may avail myself of this opportunity of introducing a few recent facts relative to the analogous work in Genoa; and this I do because these facts are of a character which may enable the reader more clearly to conceive of the present religious condition of Italy, and the state of the movement in that country.

The north of Italy and kingdom of Sardinia, as I have already said, since the Constitution granted in 1848, is open to the promulgation of evangelical truth; that is, it may be taught in almost every conceivable way, provided it is not done offensively or obtrusively. While the religion of the State is Roman Catholic, there is toleration and liberty of conscience to all; indeed, there is *no religion* at all. The king cares for none of these things, and most of his Ministers are at one with him. The present Ministry is Liberal; and Count Cavour is, to all intents and purposes, Radical. It is said that he declares he will never rest until Sardinia is another England. The Constitution is something very similar to that of England, and only requires to be developed. The present Government, however, is more liberal than the Constitution; and the Constitution gives more liberty than the majority of the people are yet able to receive: hence collision frequently takes place. Old statutes are still unrepealed; and the priest party compels the Government to do things which they are very unwilling to do. For example, one of the Cereghini was recently tried, and condemned to pay a fine of two hundred pauls, and go to prison for four months, for having some little thing to do in publishing a small controversial catechism against the Romish Church, and vending it rather too openly. An appeal was made against the sentence, and it stands unexecuted, and will do. As a matter of law, the executive Government is obliged to take up such cases and deal with them; and the nobility or priesthood—for they are one and the same—are ever on the look-out for such cases. The case of Captain Pakenham, who was expelled from Sardinia, comes under this head. The Constitution is the same now as it was then; only it is further developed in the minds of the people, and the same offence would not now likely meet the same unjust punishment, or create the same stir among the people, as it did then. But Captain Pakenham need not have been expelled from the State if our British Ministers in Sardinia had done their duty; but they are sometimes only too glad to get quit of such men as Captain Pakenham. If they had protested against the sentence, it would never have been executed. Such a thing would never have occurred to an American subject. "British residents or travellers in Italy," writes one to us, "will never have any comfort or satisfaction under the union-jack, until the present race of consuls and plenipotentiaries, sitting in high places, truckling with petty kings and grand dukes, is hanged, every one of them. There is an obliging old consul at Rome who might be exempted."

[Pg 253]

The following extract from a letter written in March last, and addressed to ourselves, from the Rev. David Kay, the able pastor of the Scotch congregation in Genoa, will be read with deep interest. We know none who knows better than Mr Kay the condition of Sardinia, or is more familiar with all that has been done and is doing there. What he says of the moral condition of Genoa may be taken as a fair sample of the other towns and States of Italy. None of them are superior to Genoa in this respect, and most of them, we believe, are below it. Alas! the picture is a sad one.

"Nothing could be more foolish or detrimental to the evangelical work in Sardinia than for every man and woman who enters the country, to pass through it or spend a few months even, to commence 'doing something,' as they generally express it. They scatter Bibles and tracts broadcast, without knowing anything of the people they give them to; and nine-tenths of these books are carried forthwith to the priest or the pawnshop, generally the former, and are burned. This does not affect them much, perhaps, because they will soon be off; but it renders the position of those stationed in the country very precarious. The priest likes very much to collect all the Bibles, Testaments, tracts, &c., into a heap, and, before setting the match to them, bring some of his English friends to see them. This is no exaggeration. At least two such cases have come under my notice. Knowledge and prudence are very essential qualities,—some knowledge of the country and its people, and some little common sense to use that knowledge well. If our British travellers and residents would give the Italians a better example of how the Sabbath ought to be kept, and is kept, by the serious in Britain, and let precept for the most part alone,—the real missionary work to be done by people competent,—generally speaking, they would advance the work far

[Pg 254]

more than by the way they often adopt. We talk of liberal Sardinia; but *liberal* is a relative term, and all who know Sardinia will only apply it relatively. When an injudicious thing is done, or even when a lawful thing is done injudiciously, we soon see where the liberty of Sardinia is. It is as lawful for a man to have a thousand Italian Bibles in his house as to have a thousand copies of 'Rob Roy.' Both packages come regularly through the custom-house, and duty is paid for them; and yet the other day in Nice several houses were searched by the gendarmes, and all Bibles and tracts carried away. This is contrary to the Constitution of the country, and yet it was done. Englishmen will make a cry about it, and demand justice (a thing generally sold to the highest bidder); but it is no use,—only harm will be done by it. Every day things in *kind* differing in *degree* are done throughout the State. The long and short of the matter is this; the minds of the people must open, and be allowed time to open gradually, ere the liberal Constitution of Sardinia can be applied to its full extent. And it is the forgetting this, or not knowing it, that usually brings these things about. Something, perhaps a very common thing, and quite lawful, and done every day, is done in a foolish way, and a foolish thing is done by the executive Government to meet it. It is not the present generation,—it has been too long under the yoke,—but the rising generation, that will exhibit the new Constitution. The grand secret is to do as much as possible,—and almost anything may be done,—and say nothing about it. It is truly interesting to watch the gradual opening up of the long shut kingdom, and very exciting to give every day a stronger blow to the wedge that opens it. I remember well, when I came here, nearly two years ago, Italian Bibles could not be got into Genoa, as other goods, by paying the duty on them, although it was perfectly lawful then, as now, to bring them in that way. For a year past we have got all the Bibles the Bible-senders of Britain will send us. Hundreds or thousands of them can be brought through the custom-house without any difficulty. We are anxiously waiting the arrival of six thousand at this moment. And yet a month has not passed since four thousand religious books,—less mischievous by far than the Bible,—were sent from our port to Marseilles. They could not be landed in any part of his Majesty's dominions. From these facts you will see that we live in a kingdom of practical contradictions.

[Pg 255]

"The priests, meanwhile, are by no means idle. They are instructing their people in the dogmas of their Church; and for this they have classes in the evening,—the zealous at least, among them have. Apart from their petty persecution in preventing us getting a place of worship (the affair of the 'Madre di Dio' you know all about, as also their general story of every convert being paid), they send missionaries to England once or twice a-year, (there is a priest whom I know just now returned), who bring, generally prostitutes, but women of a better order if they can find them, put them into a convent, to train, and, when trained, send them out to strengthen the Catholics here in their faith, and, if possible, bring back to the fold those who have gone to Geymonat; and highly accomplished trustworthy dames they send home to England to bring out others, or remain there and proselytise; or they send them here and there among the English on the Continent, sometimes to profess one thing and sometimes another. A few weeks ago one tried her skill upon us residing in Genoa, and partially succeeded. Her tale was, that she was the daughter of an English clergyman, who came abroad with her aunt, travelling in great style of course, and was put into a convent, and kept there against her will; and now she had contrived to make her escape, and perfectly trembled when she saw a priest, or even heard one named; and, although of high family, was ready to teach or do anything in an English family, to be out of reach of the priests. The things she told were most harrowing, and some of them very true-like. One English gentleman here thought of taking her into his family as governess, until he should get her father to come for her. I was asked to visit her at his house, and hear her woeful history. I went; but the line 'Timeo Danaos,' &c., was ever forcing itself upon me as I walked musingly along to the house, which was a little distance out of town. While hearing her long unconnected string of falsehoods, the thing that astonished me was, why the Roman Catholic priests should have chosen such an ugly woman to do such a piece of work; and not only had she the most forbidding appearance of any woman I ever saw, but she was the most illiterate; not a single sentence came correctly from her lips, and, in pronunciation, the letter 'h' ever was prefixed to the 'aunt' and the 'Oxford,'—the very quintessence of Cockneyism. It was clear to my mind that she had 'done' the priests, and the sequel proves my suspicions to be correct. That day before she left, she discovered that she was suspected, and very prudently threw off her mask very soon after. Her correct history we are only getting bit by bit; but all we have learned convinces us that she has deceived the Italian priest, who knows very little of English, by persuading him that she is the daughter of an English clergyman, and very highly connected in England. You have enough of the story to see the kind of plot regularly carried on. What they expected to gain by passing her off upon us, we cannot tell, unless that they wished to know earlier and more fully our movements. There is an English pervert here just now,—a weak fool, but an educated one,—on a mission to Geymonat's people, to assure them that they have committed a great sin. Having proved both systems of religion, he can judge, and there is no comfort whatever in the Protestant. He has taken up his abode here, and is prosecuting his mission vigorously.

[Pg 256]

[Pg 257]

"A traveller passing through Genoa, and visiting the churches, particularly on a feast-day, would fancy that the Genoese, or, indeed, the Catholics in Sardinia generally, are the most devoted Catholics in Italy. Many have gone away with that impression. The reason is this. All who attend the churches in Genoa do so from choice,—from religious motives; and even feel, in these days of heresy, that they are wearing the martyr's crown,—standing firmly for the true Church, while all without are scoffers; whereas in the Tuscan, Roman, and Neapolitan States, people

[Pg 258]

attend church from compulsion. If they are not in church on certain days, and at mass, they are immediately suspected. I believe the male population of Italy is one moving mass of infidelity. Sardinia is professedly so. In Genoa not one young man in a hundred attends church. If you see him there, it is to select a pretty woman for his own purposes. Morality is at a very low ebb,—lower far than you can have any idea of. Every man is sighing after his neighbour's wife; and he confesses it, and talks as gallantly of his conquest as if he had fought on the heights of Alma. A stranger walking the streets in the evening would not suppose this, for he would not be attacked, as in a town in Britain; but they have their dens, and licensed ones too. Shocking as it may appear, these houses are regularly licensed by the Government; and medical men visit them once every week for sanitary purposes. The defilement of the marriage-bed is little or nothing thought of. Marriage here is generally a money speculation, and is very frequently brought about through means of regular brokers or agents, who receive a per centage on the bride's dowry. A woman without a pretty good dowry has very little chance of a husband, unless she is young and very pretty, and willing to accept an old man. There are very few women in Geymonat's congregation. The converts are nearly all men."

While we rejoice in the spread of the light, we cannot but marvel at the mysterious connection which may be traced between the first and the second reformations in Italy, as regards the spots where this divine illumination is now breaking out. We have already adverted to the progress of the Gospel in the sixteenth century in so many of the cities of Italy, and the long roll of confessors and martyrs which every class of her citizens contributed to furnish. Not only did these men, in their prisons and at their stakes, sow the seeds of a future harvest, but they appear to have earned for the towns in which they lived, and the families from which they were sprung, a hereditary right, as it were, to be foremost in confessing that cause at every subsequent era of its revival. We cannot mark but with a feeling of heartfelt gratitude to God, in whose sight the death of his saints is precious, and who, by the eternal laws of his providence, has ordained that the example of the martyr shall prove more powerful and more lasting than that of the persecutor, that on the *self-same spots* where these men died of old, the same mighty movement has again broken out. And not only are the same cities of Turin, and Milan, and Venice, and Genoa, and Florence, figuring in this second reformation of Italy, but the same families and the same names from which God chose his martyrs in Italy three centuries ago are again coming forward, and offering themselves to the dungeon, and the galleys, and the scaffold, in the cause of the Gospel. Does not this finely illustrate the indestructible nature of truth, which enables it to survive a long period of dormancy and of apparent death, and to flourish anew from what seemingly was its tomb? And does it not also shed a beautiful light upon the order of the providence of God, whereby he remembers and revisits the seed of the righteous man, and keeps his mercy to a thousand generations of them that fear Him?

[Pg 259]

On Wednesday the 6th of November, after a stay of well-nigh a week in Florence, I took my departure by rail for Pisa. The weather was still wild and wintry, and the Apennines were white with snow to almost their bottom. The railway runs along the valley, close to the Arno, which, swollen with the rains, had flooded the vineyards and meadows in many places. A truly Italian vale is that of the Arno, whose silvery stream in ordinary times is seen winding and glistening amid the olives and the chestnut groves which border its course. When evening came, a deep spiritual beauty pervaded the region. As we swept along, many a romantic hill rose beside our path, with its clustering village, its mantling vines, and its robe of purple shadows; and many a long withdrawing ravine opened on the right and left, with its stream, and its crags, and its olives, and its castles. What would we have given for but a minute's pause, to admire the finer points! But the engine held its onward way, as if its course had been amidst the most indifferent scenery in the world. It made amends, however, for the enchanting views which it swept into oblivion behind, by perpetually opening in front others as lovely and fascinating. The twilight had set, and the moon was shining brightly, when we reached the station at Pisa.

[Pg 260]

The Austrian soldier who kept the gate challenged me as I passed, but I paid no attention, and hurried on. Had he secured my passport, I would infallibly have been detained a whole day. I traversed the long winding streets of the decaying town, crossed the Arno, on which the city stands, and, coming out on the other side of Pisa, found myself in presence of its fine ecclesiastical buildings. A moon nearly full, which seemed to veil while it in reality heightened their beauty, enabled me to see these venerable edifices to advantage. The hanging tower is a beautiful pile of white marble; the Cathedral is one of the most chastely elegant specimens of architecture in all Italy; the baptistry, too peculiar to be classic, is, nevertheless, a tasteful and elegant design. Having surveyed these lovely creations of the wealth and genius of a past age, I returned in time to take my seat in the last train for Leghorn.

[Pg 261]

The country betwixt Pisa and the coast is perfectly flat, and the flooded Arno had converted it into a sea. I could see nothing around me but a watery waste, above which the railway rose but a few inches. I felt as if again amid the Lagunes of Venice. After an hour and a half's riding, we reached Leghorn, where I took up my abode at Thomson's hotel, so well and so favourably known to English travellers. After my long sojourn in Italian *albergi*, whose uncarpeted floors, and chinky windows and doors, are but ill fitted to resist the winds and cold of winter, I sat down in "Thomson's,"—furnished as it is with all the comforts of an English inn,—with a feeling of home-comfort such as I have rarely experienced.

FROM LEGHORN TO ROME.

First Sight of the Mediterranean—Embark at Leghorn—Elba—Italian Coast—Civita Vecchia—Passport Offices—Aspect and Population of Civita Vecchia—Papal Dungeons—Start for Rome—First View of the Campagna—Its Desolation—Changed Times—The Postilion—The Road—The Milestones—First Sight of the Eternal City—The Gate—Desolate Look of the City by Night—The Pope's Custom-House and Custom-House Officer.

I ROSE early next morning, and walked down to the harbour, to have my first sight of the Mediterranean,—that renowned sea, on whose shores the classic nations of antiquity dwelt, and art and letters arose,—on whose waters the commerce of the ancient world was carried on, and the battles of ancient times fought,—whose scenery had often inspired the Greek and Latin poets,—and the grandeur of whose storms Inspiration itself had celebrated. A stiff breeze was blowing, and a white curl crested the wave, and freckled the deep blue of the waters. The Mediterranean looked young and joyous in the morning sun, as when it bore the fleets of Tyre, or heard the victorious shouts of Rome, albeit it is now edged with mouldering cities, and listens only to the clank of chains and the sigh of enslaved nations.

Early in the forenoon I waited on the Rev. Dr Stewart, the accomplished minister of the Free Church in Leghorn. He opened freely to me his ample stores of information on the subject of Tuscany, and the work in progress in that country. We called afterwards on Mr Thomas Henderson, a native of Scotland, but long settled in Leghorn as a merchant. This kind and Christian man has since, alas! gone to his grave; but the future historian of the Reformation in Italy will rank him with those pious merchants in our own land who in former days consecrated their energy and wealth to the work of furthering the Gospel, and of sheltering its poor persecuted disciples. After sojourning so long among strange faces and strange tongues, it was truly pleasant to meet two such friends,—for friends I felt them to be, though never till that day had I seen their faces.

[Pg 263]

At four of the afternoon I embarked in the steamer for Civita Vecchia, the port of Rome. The vessel I did not like at first: it was dirty, crowded, and, from some fault in the loading, lurched over while a stiff breeze was rising. By and by we got properly under weigh, and swept gallantly over the waves, along the coast, whose precipices and headlands were getting indistinct in the fading twilight. I walked the deck till past midnight, watching the moon as she rode high amid the scud overhead, and the beacon-lights of the island of Elba, as they gleamed full and bright astern. "What of the night?" I asked the helmsman. "Buono notte, Signore," was the reply. I descended to my berth.

I awoke at four of the morning, and found the steamer labouring in a rolling sea. The sirocco was blowing, and a huge black wave rolled up before it from the south. The distant coast stretched along on the left, naked and iron-bound, with the high lands of Etruria rising behind it. I wondered whether that coast had looked as unkindly to Æneas, when first he cast anchor on it after long ploughing the deep? We drew towards that silent shore, where signs of man and his labours we could discover none; and in an hour or so a small bay opened under the vessel's bows. The swell was rising every moment, and the steamer made some magnificent bounds in taking the entrance to the harbour. We entered the port of Civita Vecchia at six, passing between the two round towers, with their tiers of guns looking down upon us; and cast anchor in the ample basin, protected by the lofty walls of the forts, over which the green-topped waves occasionally looked as if enraged at missing their prey. Here we were, but not a man of us could land till first our passports had been submitted to the authorities on shore. The passengers, who were of all classes, from the English nobleman with his equipage and horses, down to the lazzaroni of Naples, crowded the deck promiscuously; and amongst them I was happy to meet again my two Russian friends, with whom I had shared the same bed-room among the Apennines. In about an hour and a half we were boarded by a police-officer. Forming us into a row on deck, and calling our names one by one, this functionary handed to each a billet, permitting the holder to go ashore, on condition of an instant compearance at the pontifical police-office. An examination of the baggage followed. This done, I leaped into one of the small boats which lay alongside the steamer, and was rowed to the quay at a few strokes, but for which service I had to recompense the boatman with about as many pauls. No sooner had I set foot on shore, than the everlasting passport bother began. The "apostolic consul" at Florence had certified me as "good for Rome;" the governor of Leghorn had but the day before done the same; but here were I know not how many officials, all assuring me that without their signatures in addition, Rome I should never see. First came the English consul, who graciously gave me—what Lord Palmerston had already given—permission to travel in the Papal States, charging me at the same time five pauls. I could not help saying, that it was all very well for nations that made no pretensions to liberty to sell to their subjects the right of moving over the earth, but that it appeared to me to be somewhat inconsistent in Britain to do so. The consul looked as if he could not bring himself to believe that he had heard aright. The number of my visa told me that I was the 4318th Englishman who had

[Pg 264]

[Pg 265]

entered the port of Civita Vecchia that season. I next took my way to the French consulate in the town-hall. I found the ante-chamber filled with Etrurian antiquities, in which the district adjoining Civita Vecchia on the north is particularly rich; and the sight of these was more than worth the moderate charge of one paul, which was made for my visée. At length I got this business off my hand; and, having secured my seat in the *diligence* for Rome, I had leisure to take a stroll through the town.

Civita Vecchia, though the port of Rome, and raised thus above its original insignificance, is but a poor place. A black hill leans over it on the north, and a naked beach, dreary and silent, runs off from it on the south. A small square, overlooked by stately mansions, emblazoned with the arms of the consuls of the various nations, forms its nucleus, from which numerous narrow and wriggling streets run out, much like the claws of a crab, from its round bulby body. It smells rankly of garlic and other garbage, and would be much the better would the Mediterranean give it a thorough cleansing once a-week. Its population is a motley and worshipful assemblage of priests, monks, French soldiers, facini, and beggars; and it would be hard to say which is the idlest, or which is the dirtiest. They seemed to be gathered promiscuously into the caffès,—priests, facini, and all,—rattling the dice and sipping coffee. Every one you come in contact with has some pretext or other for demanding a paulo of you. The Arabs of the desert are not more greedy of *backsheish*. A gentleman, as well dressed as I was at least, made up to me when I had taken my seat in the *diligence*, and, after talking five minutes on indifferent subjects, ended by demanding a paulo. "For what?" I asked, with some little surprise. "For entertaining Signore," he replied. Yet why blame these poor people? What can they do but beg? Trade, husbandry, books,—all have fled from that doomed shore.

[Pg 266]

There are three conspicuous buildings in Civita Vecchia. Two of these are hotels; the third and largest is a prison. This is one of the State prisons of the Pope. Rising story above story, and meeting the traveller on the very threshold of the country, it thrusts somewhat too prominently upon his notice the Pope's peculiar method of propagating Christianity,—namely, by building dungeons and hiring French bayonets. But to do the Pope justice, he is most unwearied in Christianizing his subjects after his own fashion. His prisons are well-nigh as numerous as his churches; and if the latter are but thinly attended, the former are crowded. He is a man "instant in season and out of season," as a good shepherd ought to be: he watches while others sleep; for it is at night that his sbirri are most active, running about in the darkness, and carrying tenderly to a safe fold those lambs which are in danger of being devoured by the Mazzinian wolves, or ensnared by Bible heretics. But to be serious,—when one finds as many prisons as churches in a territory ruled over by a minister of the Gospel, he begins to feel that there is something frightfully wrong somewhere.

When I passed the fortress of Civita Vecchia, many a noble heart lay pining within its walls. No fewer, I was assured, than two thousand Romans were there shut up as galley-slaves, their only crime being, that they had sought to substitute a lay for a sacerdotal Government,—the regime of constitutionalism for that of infallibility. In this prison the renowned brigand Gasperoni, the uncle of the prime minister of the Pope, Antonelli, had been confined; but, being too much in the way of English travellers, he was removed farther inland. This man was wont to complain loudly to those who visited him, of the cruel injustice which the world had done his fair fame. "I have been held up," he was used to say, "as a person who has murdered hundreds. It is a foul calumny. I never cut more than thirty throats in my life." He had had, moreover, to carry on his profession at a large outlay, having to pay the Pope's police an hundred scudi a-month for information.

[Pg 267]

At last mid-day came, and off we started for Rome. We trundled down the street at a tolerable pace; and one could not help feeling that every revolution of the wheel brought him nearer the Eternal City. Suddenly our course was brought to an unexpected stop. Another examination of passports and baggage at the gate! not, I verily believe, in the hope of finding contraband wares, but of having a pretext to exact a few more pauls. The half-hour wore through, though wearily. The gate was flung open; and there lay before us a blackened expanse, stretching far and wide, dreary and death-like, terminated here by the sea, and there by the horizon,—the Campagna di Roma. I turned for relief to the ocean, all angry with tempest as it was; and felt that its struggling billows were a more agreeable sight than the tomb-like stillness of the plain. The sirocco was still blowing; and the largest breakers I ever saw were tumbling on the beach. The only bright and pleasant thing in the picture was the shining, sandy coast, with its margin of white foam. It ran off in a noble crescent of fifty miles, and was seen in the far distance terminating in the low sandy promontory of Fumacina, where the Tiber falls into the sea. Alas! what vicissitudes had that coast been witness to! There, where the idle wave was now rolling, rode in other days the galleys of Rome; and there, where the stifling sirocco was sweeping the herbless plain, rose the villas of her senators, amid the bloom and fragrance of the orange and the olive. To that coast Cæsar had loved to come, to inhale its breezes, and to pass, in the society of his select friends, those hours which ambition left unoccupied. But what a change now! There was no sail on that sea; there was no dwelling on that shore: the scene was lonely and desolate, as if keel had never ploughed the one, nor human foot trodden the other.

[Pg 268]

I had seated myself in front of the vehicle, in the hope of catching the first glimpse of St Peter's, as its dome should emerge above the plain; but so wretched were our cattle, that though

we started at mid-day, and had only fifty miles of road, night fell long before we reached the gates of the Eternal City. I saw the country well, however, so long as daylight lasted. We kept in sight of the shore for twenty-five miles; and glad I was of it; for the waves, with their crest of snow and voice of thunder, seemed old friends, and I shuddered to think of plunging into that black silent wilderness on the left. At the gate of Civita Vecchia the desolation begins; and such desolation! I had often read that the Campagna was desolate; I had come there expecting to find it desolate; but when I saw that desolation I was confounded. I cannot describe it; it must be seen to be conceived of. It is not that it is silent;—the Highlands of Scotland are so. It is not that it is barren;—the sands of Arabia are so. They are as they were and should be. But not so the Campagna. There is something frightfully unnatural about its desolation. A statue is as still, as silent, and as cold, as the corpse; but then it never had life; and while you love to gaze on the one, the other chills you to the heart. So is it with the Campagna. While the sands of the desert exhilarate you, and the silence of the Swiss or Scottish Highlands is felt to be sublime, the desolation of the Campagna is felt to be unnatural: it overawes and terrifies you. Such a void in the heart of Europe, and that, too, in a land which was the home of art,—where war accumulated her spoils, and wealth her treasures,—and which gave letters and laws to the surrounding world,—is unspeakably confounding. One's faith is staggered in the past history of the country. The first glance of the blackened bosom of the Campagna makes one feel as if he had retrograded to the barbarous ages, or had been carried thousands and thousands of miles from home, and set down in a savage country, where the arts had not yet been invented, or civilization dawned. Its surface is rough and uneven, as if it had been tumbled about at some former period; it is dotted with wild bushes; and here and there lonely mounds rise to diversify it. There are no houses on it, save the post-houses, which are square, tower-like buildings, having the stables below and the dwellings above. It has its patches of grass, on which herds depasture, followed by men clothed in sheepskins and goatskins, and looking as savage almost as the animals they tend. It is, in short, a wilderness, and more frightful than the other wildernesses of the earth, because the traveller feels that here there is the hand of doom. The land lies scathed and blackened under the curse of the Almighty. To Rome the words of the prophet are as applicable as to Babylon, whom she resembled in sin, and with whom she is now joined in punishment: "Because of the wrath of the Lord, it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate. Every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah: it shall never be inhabited, neither dwelt in from generation to generation; but wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

[Pg 269]

[Pg 270]

About half-way to Rome the road parted company with the shore, and we turned inland over the plain. The night came on with drifting showers, which descended in torrents, lashing the naked plain, and battering our vehicle with the force and noise of a waterspout. And though at length the moon rose, and looked out at times from the cloud, she had nothing to show us but houseless, treeless desolation; and, as if scared at what she saw, she instantly hid her face in another mass of vapour. The stages were short, and the halts long; for which the postilion had but too good excuse, in the tangled web of thong and cord which formed the harnessings of his horses. The harnessing of an Italian *diligence* is a mystery to all but an Italian postilion. The postilion, on arriving at a stage, has to get down, shake himself, stride into the post to announce his arrival, unharness his horses, lead them deliberately into the stable, bring out the fresh ones, transfer the same harness to their backs, put them to, gulp down his glass of brandy, address a few more last observations to the loiterers, and, finally, light his cigar. He then mounts with a flourish of his whip; but his wretched nags are not able to proceed at a quicker trot than from three to four miles an hour. He meets very probably a brother of the trade, who has been at Rome, and is returning with his horses. He dismounts on the road, inquires the news, and mounts again at his pleasure. In short, you are completely in the postilion's power; and he is quite as much an autocrat in his way as the Czar himself. He sings, it may be, but his song is the very soul of melancholy,—

[Pg 271]

"Roma, Roma, Roma, non e piu,
Come prima era."

It needed but a glance at that pale moon, and drifting cloud, and naked plain, to tell me that "Rome was not now as in her first age."

As the night grew late, the inquiries became more frequent, "Are we not yet at Rome?" We were not yet at Rome; but we did all that men could with four, and sometimes six, half-starved animals, bestrode by drowsy postilions, to reach it. Now we were labouring in deep roads,—now fording impetuous torrents,—and now jolting along on the hard pavement of the Via Aurelia. By the glimpses of the moon we could see the milestones by the roadside, with "ROME" upon them. Seldom has writing thrilled me so. To find a name which fills history, and which for thirty centuries has extorted the homage of the world, and still awes it, written thus upon a common milestone, and standing there amid the tempest on the roadside, had in it something of the sublime. Was it then a reality, and not a dream? and should I in a very short time be in Rome itself,—that city which had been the theatre of so many events of world-wide influence, and which

for so many ages had borne sway over all the kings and kingdoms of the earth? Meanwhile the night became darker, and the torrents of rain more frequent and more heavy.

Towards midnight we began to climb a low hill. We could see that there was cultivation upon it, and, unless we were mistaken, a few villas. We had passed its summit, and were already engaged in the descent, when a terrific flash of lightning broke through the darkness, and tipped with a fiery radiance every object around us. On the left was the old hoary wall, with a whitish bulby mass hanging inside of it. On the right was a steep bank, with a few straggling vines dripping wet. The road between, on which we were winding downwards, was deep and worn. I had had my first view of Rome; but in how strange a way! In a few minutes we were standing at the gate.

[Pg 272]

Some little delay took place in opening it. The moments which one passes on the threshold of Rome are moments he never can forget. While waiting there till it should please the guard to open that old gate, the whole history of the wonderful city on whose threshold I now stood seemed to pass before my mind,—her kings, her consuls, her emperors,—her legislators, her orators, her poets,—her popes,—all seemed to stalk solemnly past, one after one. There was the great Romulus; there was the proud Tarquin; there was Scylla with his laurel, and Livy with his page, and Virgil with his lay, and Cæsar with his diadem, and Brutus with his dagger; there was the lordly Augustus, the cruel Nero, the beastly Caligula, the warlike Trajan, the philosophic Antoninus, the stern Hildebrand, the infamous Borgia, the terrible Innocent; and last of all, and closing this long procession of shades, came one, with shuffling gait and cringing figure, who is not yet a shade,—Pio Nono. The creak of the old gate, as the sentinel undid its bolt and threw back its ponderous doors, awoke me from my reverie.

We were stopped the moment we had entered the gate, and desired to mount to the guard-room. In a small chamber on the city-wall, seated at a table, on which a lamp was burning, we found a little tight-made brusque French officer, busied in overhauling the passports. Declaring himself satisfied after a slight survey, he hinted pretty plainly that a few pauls would be acceptable. "Did you ever," whispered my Russian friend, "see such a people?" We were remounting our vehicle, when a soldier climbed up, with musket and fixed bayonet, and forced himself in between my companion and myself, to see us all right to the custom-house, and to take care that we dropped no counterband goods by the way. Away we trundled; but the Campagna itself was not more solitary than that rain-battered and half-flooded street. No ray streamed out from window; no sound or voice of man broke the stillness; no one was abroad; the wind moaned; and the big drops fell heavily upon the plashy lava-paved causeway; but, with these exceptions, the silence was unbroken; and, to add to the dreariness, the city was in well-nigh total darkness.

[Pg 273]

I intently scrutinized the various objects, as the glare of our lamps brought them successively into view. First there came a range of massive columns, which stalked past us, wearing in the sombre night an air of Egyptian grandeur. They came on and on, and I thought they should never have passed. Little did I dream that this was the piazza of St Peter's, and that the bulb I had seen by favour of the lightning was the dome of that renowned edifice. Next we found ourselves in a street of low, mean, mouldering houses; and in a few moments thereafter we were riding under the walls of an immense fortress, which rose above us, till its battlements were lost in the darkness. Then turning at right angles, we crossed a long bridge, with shade-like statues looking down upon us from either parapet, and a dark silent river flowing underneath. I could guess what river that was. We then plunged into a labyrinth of streets of a rather better description than the one already traversed, but equally dreary and deserted. We kept winding and turning, till, as I supposed, we had got to the heart of the city. In all that way we had not met a human being, or seen aught from which we could infer that there was a living creature in Rome. At last we found ourselves in a small square,—the site of the Forum of Antoninus, though I knew it not then,—in one of the sides of which was an iron gate, which opened to receive us, *diligence* and all, and which was instantly closed and locked behind us; while two soldiers, with fixed bayonets, took their stand as sentinels outside. It was a vast barn-looking, cavern-like place, with mouldering Corinthian columns built into its massive wall, and its roof hung so high as to be scarce visible in the darkness. It had been a temple of Antoninus Pius, and was now converted into the Pope's dogana or custom-house.

[Pg 274]

In a few minutes there entered a dapper, mild-faced, gentle-mannered, stealthy-paced man, with a thick long cloak thrown over his shoulders, to protect him from the night air. The Pope's dogana-master stood before us. He paced to and fro in the most unconcerned way possible; and though it was past midnight, and trunks and carpet-bags were all open and ready, he seemed reluctant to begin the search. Nevertheless the baggage was disappearing, and its owners departing at the iron gate,—a mystery I could not solve. At length this most affable of dogana-masters drew up to me, and in a quiet way, as if wishing to conceal the interest he felt in me, he shook me warmly by the hand. I felt greatly obliged to him for this welcome to Rome, but would have felt more so if, instead of this salute, he had opened the gate and let me go. In about five minutes he again came round to where I stood, and, grasping my hand a second time, gave it a yet heartier squeeze. I was at a loss to explain this sudden friendship; for I was pretty sure this exceedingly agreeable gentleman had never seen me till that moment. How long this might have lasted I know not, had not a person in the dogana, compassionating my dullness, stepped up to me, and whispered into my ear to give the searcher a few paulos. I was a little scandalized at this

[Pg 275]

proposal to bribe his Holiness's servant; but I could see no chance otherwise of having the iron gate opened. Accordingly, I got ready the requisite *douceur*; and, waiting his return, which soon happened, took care to drop the few pauls into his palm at the next squeeze. On the instant the gate opened.

But alas! I was in a worse plight than ever. There was no commissario to be had at that hour. I was in total darkness; not a door was open; nor was there an individual in the street; and, recollecting the reputation Rome had of late acquired for midnight assassinations, I began to grow a little apprehensive. After wandering about for some time, I lighted on a French sentry, who obligingly led me to a *café* hard by, which is kept open all night. There I found a young German, an artist evidently, who, having finished his coffee, politely volunteered to conduct me to the Hotel d'Angleterre.

CHAPTER XXI.

[Pg 276]

MODERN ROME.

Tower of Capitol best Site for studying Topography of Rome—Resemblance in the Sites of great Cities—Site of Rome—Campagna di Roma—Its Extent and Boundaries—Ancient Fertility and Magnificence—Modern Desolation of Campagna—Approach to Rome from the North—Etruria—Solitariness of this once famous Highway—First Sight of Rome—The Flaminian Way—The Porta del Popolo—The Piazza del Popolo—Its Antiquities—Pincian Hill—General Plan of Rome—The Corso—The Via Ripetta—The Via Babuina—Population—Disproportionate Numbers of Priests—Variety of Ecclesiastical Costumes—Dresses of the various Orders—Their indescribably Filthy Appearance—The ordinary Priest—The Priest's Face—The Beggars—Want of Arrangement in its Edifices—Rome an unrivalled Combination of Grandeur and Dirt.

ONE of my first days in Rome was passed on the top of the tower of the Capitol. It is incomparably the best spot on which to study the topography of the Eternal City, with that of the surrounding region. Here one stands between the living and the dead,—between the city of the Cæsars, which lies entombed on the Seven Hills, with the vine, the ivy, and the jessamine mantling its grave, and the city of the Popes, spread out with its cupolas, and towers, and everlasting chimes, on the low flat plain of the Campus Martius. The world has not such another ruin,—so vast, colossal, and magnificent,—as Rome. Let us sketch the features of the scene as they here present themselves.

[Pg 277]

There would appear to be a law determining the *site*, as well as the *character*, of great events. It has often been remarked, that there is a resemblance between all the great battle-fields of the world. One attribute in especial they all possess, namely, that of vastness; inspiring the mind of the spectator with an idea of grandeur, to which the recollection of the carnage of which they were the scene adds a feeling of melancholy. The Troy and the Marathon of the ancient world have found their representative in the modern one, in that gloomy expanse in Flanders where Napoleon witnessed the total defeat of his arms and the final overthrow of his fortunes. We would make the same remark regarding great capitals. There is a family likeness in their sites. The chief cities of the ancient world arose, for the most part, on extensive plains, nigh some great river; for rivers were the railroads of early times. I might instance queenly Thebes, which arose in the great valley of the Nile, with a boundary of fine mountains encircling the plain on which it stood. Babylon found a seat on the great plain of Chaldea, on the banks of the Euphrates. Niniveh arose on the same great plain, on the banks of the Tigris, with the glittering line of the snowy Kurdistan chain bounding its horizon. To come down to comparatively modern times, ROME has been equally fortunate with her predecessors in a site worthy of her greatness and renown. No one needs to be told that the seat of that city, which for so many ages held the sceptre of the world, is the CAMPAGNA DI ROMA.

I need not dwell on the magnificence of that truly imperial plain, to which nature has given, in a country of hills, dimensions so goodly. From the foot of the Apennines it runs on and on for upwards of an hundred miles, till it meets the Neapolitan frontier at Terracina. Its breadth from the Volscian hills to the sea cannot be less than forty miles. Towards the head of this great plain lies Rome, than which a finer site for the capital of a great empire could nowhere have been found. By nature it is most fertile; its climate is delicious. It is watered by the Tiber, which is seen winding through it like a thread of gold. A boundary of glorious hills encloses it on all sides save the south-west. On the south-east are the gentle Volscians, clothed with flourishing woods and sparkling with villas. Running up along the plain, and lying due east of Rome, are the Sabine hills, of a deep azure colour, with a fine mottling of light and shade upon their sides. Shutting in the plain on the north, and sweeping round it in a magnificent bend towards the west, are the craggy and romantic Apennines. Such was the stage on which sat invincible, eternal Rome. This plain was traversed, moreover, by thirty-three highways, which connected the city with every quarter of the habitable globe. Its surface exhibited the richest cultivation. From side to side it was covered with gardens and vineyards, in the verdure and blossoms of an almost perpetual spring; amid which rose the temples of the gods of Rome, the trophies of her warriors, the tombs and monuments of her legislators and orators, and the villas and rural retreats of her senators

[Pg 278]

and merchants. Indeed, this plain would seem, in imperial times, to have been one vast city, stretching out from the white strand of the Mediterranean to the summit of the Volscian hills.

But in proportion to its GRANDEUR then is its DESOLATION now. From the sea to the mountains it lies silent, waste, unploughed, unsown,—a houseless, treeless, blackened wilderness. "Where," you exclaim, "are its highways?" They are blotted out. "Where are its temples, its palaces, its vineyards?" All swept away. Scarce a heap remains, to tell of its numerous and magnificent structures. Their very ruins are ruined. The land looks as if the foot of man had never trodden it, and the hand of man never cultivated it. Here it rises into melancholy mounds; there it sinks into hollows and pits: like that plain which God overthrew, it neither is sown nor beareth. It is inhabited by the fox, haunted by the brigand, and frequented in spring and autumn by a few herdsmen, clad in goats'-skins, and living in caves and wigwams, and reminding one, by their savage appearance, of the satyrs of ancient mythology. It is silent as a sepulchre. John Bunyan might have painted it for his "Valley of the Shadow of Death."

[Pg 279]

I shall suppose that you are approaching Rome from the north. You have disengaged yourself from the Apennines,—the picturesque Apennines,—in whose sunny vales the vine still ripens, and on whose sides the olive still lingers. You are advancing along a high plateau which rises here and there into conical mounts, on which sits some ancient and renowned city, dwindled now into a poor village, whose inhabitants are husbandmen, and who move about oppressed by the languor that weighs upon this whole land. Beneath your feet are subterranean chambers, in which mailed warriors sleep,—for it is the ancient land of Etruria over which your track lies. Before the wolf suckled Romulus, this soil had nourished a race of heroes. The road, so filled in former times by a never-failing concourse of legions going forth to battle or returning in triumph,—of consuls and legates bearing the high behests of the senate to the subject provinces,—and of ambassadors and princes coming to sue for peace, or to lay their tributary gifts at the feet of Rome,—is now solitary and untrodden, save by the traveller from a far country, or the cowed and corded pilgrim whose vow brings him to the shrine of the apostles. Stacks of mouldering brickwork attract the eye by the wayside,—the remains of temples and monuments when the land was in its prime. You scarce take note of the scattered and stunted olives which are dying through age. The fields are wretchedly tilled, where tilled at all. The country appears to grow only the more desolate, and the silence the more dreary and unsupportable, as you advance. "Roma! Roma!" is chanted forth in melancholy tones by the postilion. "Roma" is graven on the milestones; but you cannot persuade yourself that Rome you shall find in the heart of a desert like this. You have gained the brow of a low hill; you have passed the summit, and got half-way down the declivity; when suddenly a vision bursts on your sight that rivets you to the spot. There is the Tiber rolling its yellow floods at your feet; and there, spread out in funereal gloom between the mountains and the sea, is the CAMPAGNA DI ROMA. The spectacle is sublime, despite its desolation. There is but one object in the vast expanse, but that is truly a majestic one. Alone, on the silent plain, judgment-stricken and sackcloth-clad, occupying the same spot where she "glorified herself and lived deliciously," and said in her heart, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," is ROME.

[Pg 280]

You are to cross the Tiber. Already your steps are on the Pons Milvius, where Christianity triumphed over Paganism in the person of Constantine, and over the parapet of which Maxentius, in his flight, flung the seven-branched golden candlestick, which Titus brought from the temple of Jerusalem. The Flaminian way, which you are now to traverse, runs straight to the gate of Rome. In front is the long line of the city walls, within which you can descry the proud dome of St Peter's, the huge rotundity of St Angelo, or "Hadrian's Mole," and a host of inferior cupolas and towers, which in any other city would suffice to give a character to the place, but are here thrown into the shade by the two unrivalled structures I have named. You are not less than two miles from the gate; yet such are the purity and transparency of an Italian sky, that every stone almost in the old wall,—every scar which the hand of time or the ravages of war have made in it,—is visible. As you advance, Monte Mario rises on the right, with a temple on its crest, and rows of pine-trees and cypresses on its sides. On the left, at a goodly distance, are seen the purple hills of Frascati and Albano, with their delicate chequering of light and shadow, and the Tiber, appearing to burst like a river of gold from their azure bosom. The beauty of these objects is much heightened by the blackness of the plain around.

[Pg 281]

We now enter Rome. The square in which we find ourselves,—the Porta del Popolo,—is worthy of Rome. It is a clean, neatly-paved quadrangular area, of an hundred and fifty by an hundred yards in extent, edged on all sides by noble mansions. Fronting you as you enter the gate are the domes of two fine churches, in one of which Luther preached when he was in Rome. Between them the Corso is seen shooting out in a long narrow line of lofty façades, traversing the entire length of the city from north to south. On the right is the house of Mr Cass, the United States' consul, behind which rises a series of hanging gardens. There was dug the grave of Nero; but the ashes of the man before whom the world trembled cannot now be found. On the left rises the terraced slope of the Pincian hill, with its galleries, its statues, its stately cypresses, and its noble carriage-drive. On the opposite declivity are the gardens of Sallust, looking down on the *campus sceleratus*, where the unfaithful vestal-virgins were burned.

In the middle of the spacious area is a fine fountain, whose waters are received into a spacious basin, guarded by marble lions. And there, too, stands the obelisk of Rhamses I., severe and

[Pg 282]

solemn, a stranger, like ourselves, from a far land. This is the same which that monarch erected before the Temple of the Sun in Heliopolis, the ON of Scripture, and which Augustus transported to Rome. It is a single block of red granite, graven from top to bottom with hieroglyphics, which it is quite possible the eyes of Moses may have scanned. When that column was hewn, not a stone had been laid on the Capitol, and the site of Rome was a mere marsh; yet here it stands, with its mysterious scroll still unread. Speak, stranger, and tell us, with thy deep Coptic voice, the secrets of four thousand years ago. Say, wouldst thou not like to revisit thy native Nile, and spend thine age beside the tombs of the Pharaohs, the companions of thy youth, and amidst the congenial silence of the sands of Egypt?

The traveller who would enjoy the finest view of the modern city must ascend the Pincian hill. In the basin beneath him he beholds spread out a flat expanse of red-tiled roofs, traversed by the long line of the Corso, and bristling with the tops of innumerable domes, columns, and obelisks. Some thirty or forty cupolas give an air of grandeur to the otherwise uninteresting mass of red; and conspicuous amongst these, over against the spectator, is the princely dome of St Peter's, and the huge bulk of the Castle of St Angelo. The Tiber is seen creeping sluggishly at the base of the Janiculum, the sides of which are thinly dotted with villas and gardens, while its summit is surmounted by a long stretch of the old wall.

Standing in the Piazza del Popolo, the person is in a good position for comprehending the arrangement of modern Rome. Here three streets have their rise, which, running off in diverging lines, like spokes from the nave of a wheel, traverse the city, and form, with the cross streets which connect them, the osteology of the Eternal City. This at least is the arrangement which obtains till you reach the region lying around the Capitol, which is an inextricable network of lanes, courts, and streets. The centre one of the three streets we have indicated is the Corso. It is a good mile in length, and runs straight south, extending from the Flaminian gate to almost the foot of the Capitol. To an English eye it is wanting in breadth, though the most spacious street in Rome. It is but indifferently kept in point of cleanliness, though the most fashionable promenade of the Romans. Here only you find anything resembling a flag-pavement: all the other streets are causewayed from side to side with small sharp pieces of lava, which pain the foot at every step. The shops are small and dark, resembling those of our third and fourth-rate towns, and exhibiting in their wares a superabundance of cameos, mosaics, Etruscan vases, and statuary,—these being almost the sole native manufacture of Rome. It is adorned with several truly noble palaces, and with the colonnades and porticos of a great number of churches. It was the boast of the Romans that the Pope could say mass in a different church every day of the year. This, we believe, is true, there being more than three hundred and sixty churches in that city, but not one copy of the Bible that is accessible by the people.

[Pg 283]

The second street,—that on the right,—is the Via Ripetta, which leads off in the direction of St Peter's and the Vatican. It takes one nigh the tomb of Augustus, now converted into a hippodrome; the Pantheon, whose pristine beauty remains undefaced after twenty centuries; the Collegio Romano; and, towards the foot of the Capitol, the Ghetto,—a series of mean streets, occupied by the Jews. The third street,—that on the left,—is the Via Babuino. It traverses the more aristocratic quarter of Rome,—if we can use such a phrase in reference to a city whose nobles are lodging-house keepers, and live—

[Pg 284]

"Garreted
In their ancestral palace,"—

running on by the Piazza di Spagna, which the English so much frequent, to the Quirinal, the Pope's summer palace, and the form of Trajan, whose column, after the many copies which have been made of it, still stands unrivalled and unapproached in beauty.

"And though the passions of man's fretful race
Have never ceased to eddy round its base,
Not injured more by touch of meddling hands
Than a lone obelisk 'mid Nubian sands."

On the Corso there is considerable bustle. The little buying and selling that is done in Rome is transacted here. Half the population that one sees in the Corso are priests and French soldiers. The population of Rome is not much above an hundred thousand; its ecclesiastical persons, however, are close on six thousand. Let us imagine, if we can, the state of things were the ecclesiastics of all denominations in Scotland to be doubled, and the whole body to be collected into one city of the size of Edinburgh! Such is the state of Rome. The great majority of these men have no duty to do, beyond the dreary and monotonous task of the daily lesson in the breviary. They have no sermons to write and preach; they do not visit the sick; they have no books or newspapers; they have no family duties to perform. With the exception of the Jesuits, who are much employed in the confessional, the whole fraternity of regulars and seculars, white, black, brown, and gray, live on the best, and literally do nothing. But, of course, six thousand heads cannot be idle. The amount of mischief that must be continually brewing in Rome,—the wars that shake convents,—the gossip and scandal that pollute society,—the intrigues that destroy families,—may be more easily imagined than told. Were the secret history of that city for but one short week to be written, what an astounding document it would be! and what a curious commentary on that mark of a "true Church," *unity*! Well were it for the world were the plots hatched in Rome

[Pg 285]

felt only within its walls.

On the streets of the Eternal City you meet, of course, every variety of ecclesiastical costume. The eye is at first bewildered with the motley show of gowns, cloaks, cowls, scapulars, and veils; of cords, crosses, shaven heads, and naked feet,—provoking the reflection what a vast deal of curious gear it takes to teach Christianity! There you have the long black robe and shovel hat of the secular priest; the tight-fitting frock and little three-cornered bonnet of the Jesuit; the shorn head and black woollen garment of the Benedictine;—there is the Dominican, with his black cloak thrown over his white gown, and his shaven head stuck into a slouching cowl;—there is the Franciscan, with his half-shod feet, his three-knotted cord, and his coarse brown cloak, with its numerous pouches bulging with the victuals he has been begging for;—there is the Capuchin, with his bushy beard, his sandaled feet, his patched cloak, and his funnel-shaped cowl, reminding one of Harlequin's cap;—there is the Carmelite, with shaven head begirt with hairy continuous crown, loose flowing robe, and broad scapular;—there is the red gown of the German student, and the wallet of the begging friar. This last has been out all morning begging for the poor, and is now returning with replenished wallet to his convent on the Capitol, where dwell monks now, as geese aforetime. After dining on the contents of his well-filled sack, with a slight addition from the vineyards of the Capitol, he will scatter the crumbs among the crowd of beggars which may be seen at this hour climbing the convent stairs.

[Pg 286]

But however these various orders may differ in the colour of their cloaks or the shape of their tonsure, there is one point in which they all agree,—that is, dirt. They are indescribably filthy. Clean water and soap would seem to be banished the convents, as indulgences of the flesh which cannot be cherished without deadly peril to the soul, and which are to be shunned like heresy itself. They smell like goats; and one trembles to come within the droppings of their cloak, lest he should carry away a few little *souvenirs*, which the "holy man" might be glad to part with. A fat, stalwart, bacchant, boorish race they are, giving signs of anything but fasting and flagellation; and I know of nothing that would so dissipate the romance which invests monks and nuns in the eyes of some, like bringing a ship-load of them over to this country, and letting their admirers see and smell them.

Even the ordinary priest appears but little superior to the monk in the qualities we have named. Dirty in person, slovenly in dress, and wearing all over a careless, fearless, bullying air, he looks very little the gentleman, and, if possible, less the clergyman. But in Rome he can afford to despise appearances. Is he not a priest, and is not Rome his own? Accordingly, he plants his foot firmly, as if he felt, like Antæus, that he touches his native earth; he sweeps the crowd around with a full, scornful, defiant eye; and should Roman dare to measure glances with him, that brow of brass would frown him into the dust. In Rome the "priest's face" attains its completest development. That face has not its like among all the faces of the world. It is the same in all countries, and can be known under every disguise,—a soldier's uniform or a porter's blouse. At Maynooth you may see it in all stages of growth; but at Rome it is perfected; and when perfected, there is an entire blotting out of all the kindly emotions and human sympathies, and there meets the eye something that is at once below and above the face of man. If we could imagine the scorn, pride, and bold bad daring of one of Milton's fallen angels, grafted on a groundwork of animal appetites, we should have a picture something like the priest's face.

[Pg 287]

The priests will not be offended should the beggars come next in our notice of the Eternal City. The beggars of Rome are almost an institution of themselves; and, though not chartered, like the friars, their numbers and their ancient standing have established their rights. What is it that strikes you on first entering the "Holy City?" Is it its noble monuments,—its fine palaces,—its august temples? No; it is its flocks of beggars. You cannot halt a moment, but a little colony gathers round you. Every church has its beggar, and sometimes a whole dozen. If you wish to ascertain the hours of any ceremony in a church, you are directed to ask its beggar, as here you would the beadle. Every square, every column, every obelisk, every fountain, has its little colony of beggars, who have a prescriptive right to levy alms of all who come to see these objects. We shall afterwards advert to the proof thence arising as to the influence of the system of which this city is the seat.

Rome, though it surpasses all the cities of the earth in the number, beauty, and splendour of its public monuments, is imposing only in parts. It presents no effective *tout ensemble*. Some of its noblest edifices are huddled into corners, and lost amid a crowd of mean buildings. The Pantheon rises in the fish-market. The Navonna Mercato, which has the finest fountain in Italy, is a rag-fair. The church of the Lateran is approached through narrow rural lanes. The splendid edifice of St Paul's stands outside the walls, in the midst of swamps and marshes so unwholesome, that there is not a house near it. The meanest streets of Rome are those that lie around St Peter's and the Vatican. The Corso is in good part a line of noble palaces; but in other parts of the city you pass through whole streets, consisting of large massive structures, once comfortable mansions, but now squalid, filthy, and unfurnished hovels, resembling the worst dens of our great cities. It cannot fail to strike one, too, as somewhat anomalous, that there should be such a vast deal of ruins and rubbish in the *Eternal City*. And as regards its sanitary condition, there may be a great deal of holiness in Rome, but there is very little cleanliness in it. When a shower falls, and the odour of the garbage with which the streets are littered is exhaled, the smell is insufferable. One had better not describe the spectacles that one sees every day on the

[Pg 288]

marble stairs of the churches. The words of Archenholtz in the end of last century are still applicable:—"Filth," says he, "infects all the great places of Rome except that of St. Peter's; nor would this be excepted from the general rule, but that it lies at greater distance from the dwellings. It is incredible to what a pitch filthiness is carried in Rome. As palaces and houses are mostly open, their entrance is usually rendered unsufferable, being made the receptacle of the most disgusting wants." In fine, Rome is the most extraordinary combination of grandeur and ruin, magnificence and dirt, glory and decay, which the world ever saw. We must distinguish, however: the grandeur has come down to the Popes from their predecessors,—the filth and ruin are their own.

CHAPTER XXII.

[Pg 289]

ANCIENT ROME—THE SEVEN HILLS.

Site of Ancient Rome—Calm after the Storm—The Seven Hills—Their General Topography—The Aventine—The Palatine—The Ruins of the Palace of Cæsar—View of Ruins of Rome from the Palatine—The Cælian—The Viminale—The Quirinal—Other two Hills, the Janiculum and the Vatican—The Forum—The Arch of Titus—The Coliseum—The Mamertine Prison—External Evidence of Christianity—Rome furnishes overwhelming Proofs of the Historic Truth of the New Testament—These stated—The Three Witnesses in the Forum—The Antichrist come—*Coup d'Œil* of Rome.

BUT where is the Rome of the Cæsars, that great, imperial, and invincible city, that during thirteen centuries ruled the world? If you would see her, you must seek for her in the grave. You are standing, I have supposed, on the tower of the Capitol, with your face towards the north, gazing down on the flat expanse of red roofs, bristling with towers, columns, and domes, that covers the plain at your feet. Turn now to the south. There is the seat of her that once was mistress of the world. There are the Seven Hills. They are furrowed, tossed, cleft; and no wonder. The wars, revolutions, and turmoils of two thousand years have rolled their angry surges over them; but now the strife is at an end; and the calm that has succeeded is deep as that of the grave. These hills, all unconscious of the past, form a scene of silent and mournful beauty, with fragments of temples protruding through their soil, and humble plants and lowly weeds covering their surface.

[Pg 290]

The topography of these famous hills it is not difficult to understand. If you make the Capitoline in which you stand the centre one, the remaining six are ranged round it in a semi-circle. They are low broad swellings or mounts, of from one to two miles in circumference. We shall take them as they come, beginning at the west, and coming round to the north.

First comes the AVENTINE. It rises steep and rocky, with the Tiber washing its north-western base. It is covered with the vines and herbs of neglected gardens, amid which rises a solitary convent and a few shapeless ruins. At its southern base are the baths of Caracalla, which, next to the Coliseum, are the greatest ruin in Rome.

Descend its eastern slope,—cross the valley of the Circus Maximus,—and you begin to climb the PALATINE hill, the most famous of the seven. The Palatine stands forward from the circular line, and is divided from where you stand only by the little plain of the Forum. It was the seat of the first Roman colony; and when Rome grew into an empire, the palace of the Cæsars rose upon it, and the Palatine was henceforward the abode of the world's master. The site is nearly in the middle of ancient Rome, and commands a fine view of the other hills, the Capitol only overtopping it. The imperial palace which rose on its summit must have been a conspicuous as well as imposing object from every part of the city. Three thousand columns are said to have adorned an edifice, the saloons, libraries, baths, and porticos of which, the wealth and art of ancient Rome had done their utmost to make worthy of their imperial occupant. A dark night has overwhelmed the glory that once irradiated this mount. It is now a huge mountain of crumbling brickwork, bearing on its broad level top a luxuriant display of cabbages and vines, amid which rise the humble walls of a convent, and a small but tasteful villa, which is owned, strange to say, by an Englishman. The proprietor of the villa and the little colony of monks are now the only inhabitants of the Palatine. In walking over it, you stumble upon blocks of marble, remains of terraces, vaults still retaining their frescoes, arches, porticos, and vast substructions of brickwork, all crushed and blended into one common ruin. In these halls power dwelt and crime revelled: now the owl nestles in their twilight vaults, and the ivy mantles their crumbling ruins. The western side of this mound rises steep and lofty, crested with a row of noble cypress trees. They are tall and upright, and wear in the mind's eye a shadowy shroud of gloom, looking like mourners standing awed and grief-stricken beside the grave of the Cæsars. When the twilight falls and the stars come out, their dark moveless figures, relieved against the sky, present a sight peculiarly impressive and solemn.

[Pg 291]

The general aspect and condition of the Palatine have been sketched by Byron with his usual power:—

"Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower, grown,

Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescoes steeped
In subterranean damp, where the owl peeped,
Deeming it midnight;—temples, baths, or halls,
Pronounce who can; for all that learning reaped
From her research hath been, that these are walls.
Behold the imperial mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls."

But Cowper rises to a yet higher pitch, and reads the true moral which is taught by this fallen mount. For to Rome may we apply his lines on the fall of the once proud monarchy of Spain.

[Pg 292]

"Art thou, too, fallen, Iberia? Do we see
The robber and the murderer weak as we?
Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise
Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies,
Thy pomp is in the grave, thy glory laid
Low in the pits thine avarice has made.
We come with joy from our eternal rest,
To see the oppressor in his turn oppressed.
Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand
Rolled over all our desolated land,
Shook principalities and kingdoms down,
And made the mountains tremble at his frown?
The sword shall light upon thy boasted powers,
And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.
'Tie thus Omnipotence his law fulfils,
And Vengeance executes what Justice wills."

One day I ascended the Palatine, picking my steps with care, owing to the abominations of all kinds that cover the path, to spend an hour on the mount, and survey from thence the mighty wrecks of empire strewn around it. The steps of the stair by which I ascended were formed of blocks of marble, the half-effaced carvings on which showed that they had formed parts of former edifices. Protruding from the soil, and strewn over its surface, were fragments of columns and capitols of pillars. I emerged on the summit at the spot where the vestibule of Nero's palace is supposed to have stood. I thought of the guards, the senators, the ambassadors, that had crowded this spot,—the spoils, trophies, and monuments, that had adorned it; and my heart sank at the sight of its naked desolation and dreary loneliness. The flat top of the hill ran off to the south, covered with a various and somewhat incongruous vegetation. Here was a thicket of laurels, and there a clump of young oaks; here a garden of vines, and there rows of cabbages. A monk, habited in brown, was looking out at the door of his convent; and one or two women were busy among the vegetables, making up a load for market. On the farther edge of the hill rose the tall, moveless, silent cypresses of which I have spoken. On the right rose the square tower of the Capitol, with the perperine substructions of its Tabularium, coeval with the age of the kings; and skirting its base were the cupolas of modern churches, and the nodding columns of fallen temples, beautiful even in their ruin, and more eloquent than Cicero, whose living voice had often been heard on the spot where they now moulder in silent decay. A little nearer was the naked, jagged front of the Tarpeian rock, crested a-top with gardens, and its base buried in rubbish, which is slowly gaining on its height. In front was a noble bend of the Tiber, rolling on in mournful majesty, amid the majestic silence of these mighty desolations. Beyond were the red roofs and mean streets of the Trastevere, with the empty upland slope of the Janiculum, crowned by the line of the gray wall. Behind, and immediately beneath me, was the Forum, where erst the Romans assembled to enact their laws and choose their magistrates. A ragged line of ghastly ruins,—porticos without temples, and temples without porticos, their noble vaultings yawning like caverns in the open day,—was seen bounding its farther edge. Its floor was a rectangular expanse of shapeless swellings and yawning pits. Here reposed a herd of buffaloes; there a little drove of swine; yonder stood a row of carts; and in the midst of these nowadays picturesque objects rose the gray arch of Titus. At its base sat a beggar; while an artist, at a little distance, was sketching it with the calotype. A peasant was traversing the Via Sacra, bearing to his home a supply of city-baked bread. A dozen or two of old men with spades and barrows were clearing away the earth from the ruins of the Temple of Venus and Rome. In the south-eastern angle of the plain rose the titanic bulk of the Coliseum, fearfully gashed and torn, yet sublime in its decay. Over the furrowed and ragged summits of the Cælian and Esquiline mounts were seen the early snows, glittering on the peaks of the Volscian and Sabine range. Such was the scene which presented itself to me from the top of the Palatine. How different, I need not say, from that which must have often met the eye of Cæsar from the same point, prompting the proud boast,—"Is not this great" Rome, "that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations!... Is this the man that did make the earth to tremble,—that did shake kingdoms,—that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?"

[Pg 293]

[Pg 294]

A little eastward of the Palatine, and seen over its shoulder, as surveyed from the tower of the Capitol, is the CÆLIAN Mount. Its summit is marked by the ruins of an ancient edifice,—the Curia Hostilia,—and the statued front of a modern temple,—the church of S. John Lateran, which is even more renowned in the pontifical annals than the other is in classic story. Moving your eye across the valley of the Forum, it falls upon the flat surface of the ESQUILINE. It is marked, like the former, by an ancient ruin and a modern edifice. Amid its vineyards and rural lanes rise the massive remains of the baths of Titus, and the gorgeous structure of Maria Maggiore. The VIMINALE comes next; but forming, as it did, a plain betwixt the Esquiline and the Quirinal, it is difficult to trace its limits. It is distinguishable mainly by the baths of Dioclesian, now a French barrack, and the church of San Lorenzo, which occupies its highest point. The QUIRINAL is the last of the Seven Hills. It is covered with streets, and crowned with the summer palace and gardens of the Pope.

[Pg 295]

Thus have we made the tour of the Seven Hills, commencing at the Aventine on the extreme right, and proceeding in a semicircular line over the low swellings which lie in their peaceful covering of flower and weed, onward to the Quirinal, which rises, with its glittering casements, on the extreme left. They hold in their arms, as it were, modern Rome, with the Tiber, like a golden belt, tying in the city, and bounding the Campus Martius, on which it is seated. On the west of the Tiber are other two hills, which, though not of the seven, are worth mentioning. The first is the JANICULUM, with the *Trastevere* at its base. The inhabitants of this district pride themselves on their pure Roman blood, and look down upon the rest of the inhabitants as a mixed race; and certainly, if ferocious looks and continual frays can make good their claim, they must be held as a colony of the olden time, which, nestling in this nook of Rome, have escaped the intermixtures and revolutions of eighteen centuries. It has been remarked that there is a striking resemblance between their faces and those of the ancient Romans, as graven on the arch of Titus. They are the nearest neighbours of the Pope, whose own hill, the VATICAN, rises a little to the north of them. On the Vatican mount stood anciently the circus of Nero; and here many of the early Christians, amid unutterable torments, yielded up their lives. On the spot where they died have arisen the church of St Peter and the palace of the Vatican,—now but another name for whatever is formidable to the liberties of the world.

[Pg 296]

But beyond question, the spot of all others the most interesting in Rome is the Forum. You look right down into it from where you stand. Whether it be the eloquence, or the laws, or the victories, or the magnificent monuments of ancient Rome, the light reflected from them all is concentrated on this plain. How often has Tully spoken here! How often has Cæsar trodden it! Over that very pavement which the excavations have laid bare, the chariots of Scylla, and of Titus, and of a hundred other warriors, have rolled. But the triumphs which this plain witnessed, once deemed eternal, are ended now; and the clods which that Italian slave turns up, or which that priest treads on so proudly, are perchance part of the dust of that heroic race which conquered the world. The tombs of the Cæsars are empty now, and their ashes have been scattered long since over the soil of Rome. Of the many beautiful edifices that stood around this plain, not one remains entire: a few mouldering columns, half buried in rubbish, or dug out of the soil, only remain to show where temples stood. But there is one little arch which has survived that dire tempest of ruin in which temple and tower went down,—the Arch of Titus, which has sculptured upon its marble the sad story of the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews. That little arch, wonderful to tell, stands between two mighty ruins,—the fallen palace of the Cæsars on the one hand, and the kingly but ruined mass of the Coliseum on the other.

As regards the Coliseum, architects, I believe, do not much admire it; but to myself, who did not look at it with a professional eye, it seemed as if I had never seen a ruin half so sublime. I never grew weary of gazing upon it. It rises amid the hoar ruins of Rome, scarred and rent, yet wearing an eternal youth; for with the most colossal size it combines in the very highest degree simplicity of design and beauty of form. To stand on its area, and survey the sweep of its broken benches, is to feel as if you were standing in the midst of an amphitheatre of hills, and were gazing on concentric mountain-ranges. How powerfully do its associations stir the soul! How many spirits now in glory have died on that arena! The Romans, we shall suppose, have been occupied all day in witnessing mimic fights, which display the skill, but do not necessarily imperil the life, of the combatants. But now the sun is westering; the shadow of the Palatine begins to creep across the Forum, and the villas on the Alban hills burn in the setting rays, and the Romans, before retiring to their homes, demand their last grand spectacle,—the death of some poor unhappy captive or gladiator. The victim steps upon the arena amid the deep stillness of the overwhelming multitude. It is no mimic combat his: he is "appointed to death." This lets us into the peculiar force of Paul's words, "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were, appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

[Pg 297]

But the most touching recollection connected with this city is this,—even that part of the Word of God was written in it, and that a greater than Cæsar has trodden its soil. A few paces below where we stand is the Mamertine prison, in whose dungeons, it is probable, Paul was confined; for this was the state-prison, and offences against religion were accounted state-offences. It is hewn in the rock of the Capitoline hill, dungeon below dungeon; and when surveying it, I could not but feel, that among all the exploits of Roman valour, there was not one half so heroic as that of the man who, with a cruel death staring him in the face, could sit down in this dungeon, where

[Pg 298]

day never dawned, and write these heroic words,—“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Here I may be allowed to allude to a branch of the external evidence of Christianity which has not received all the notice to which it is entitled. When surveying from the tower of the Capitol the ruins of ancient Rome, I felt strongly the absurdity—the almost idiotcy—of denying the historic truth of Christianity. On such a spot one might as well deny that ancient Rome existed, as deny that Christianity was preached here eighteen centuries ago, and rose upon the ruins of paganism. At the distance of Rome, and amid the darkness of Italian ignorance, we can conceive of a Roman holding that the life of Knox is a fable,—that no such man ever existed, or ever preached in Scotland, or ever effected the Reformation from Popery. But bring him to the Castle Hill of Edinburgh,—bid him look round upon city and country, studded with the churches and schools of the reformed faith, planted by Knox,—show him the mouldering remains of the old cathedrals from which the priesthood and faith of Rome were driven out,—and, unless his mind is constituted in some extraordinary way, he would no longer doubt that such a man as Knox existed, and that Scotland has been reformed from Romanism to Presbyterianism. So is it at Rome. Around you are the temples of the ancient paganism. Here are ruins still bearing the inscriptions and effigies of the pagan deities and the pagan rites. Can any sane man doubt that paganism once reigned here? You can trace the history of its reign still graven on the ruins of Rome; but you can trace it down till only seventeen centuries ago: then it suddenly stops; a new writing appears upon the stones; a new religion has acquired the ascendancy in Rome, and left its memorials graven upon pillar, and column, and temple. Can any man doubt that Paul visited this city,—that he preached here, as the “Acts of the Apostles” records,—and that, after two centuries of struggles and martyrdoms, the faith which he preached triumphed over the paganism of Rome? Look along the Via Sacra,—that narrow paved road which leads southward from the Capitol: the very stones over which the chariot of Scylla rolled are still there. The road runs straight between the Palatine Mount, where the ivy and the cypress strive to mantle the ruins of the palace of the Cæsars, and the wonderful and ever beautiful structure of the Coliseum. In the valley between is a beautiful arch of marble,—the Arch of Titus. The palace of the world's master lies in ruins on the one side of it; the Coliseum, the largest single structure which human hands ever created, stands rent, and scarred, and bowed, on the other; and between these two mighty ruins this little arch rises entire. What a wonderful providence has spared it! On that arch is graven the record of the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews; and the great fact of the existence of the Old Testament economy is also attested upon it; for there plainly appears on the stone, the furniture of the temple, the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the silver trumpets. But further, about two miles to the south of Rome are the Catacombs. In these catacombs, which, not unlike the coal-mines of our own country, traverse under ground the Campagna for a circuit of many miles, the early Christians, lived during the primitive persecutions. There they worshipped, there they died, and there they were buried; and their simple tombstones, recording that they died in peace, and in the hope of eternal life through Christ, are still to be seen to the number of many thousands. How came these tombstones there, if early Christianity and the early martyrs be a fable? If Christianity be a forgery, the arch of Titus, with its sacred symbols, is also a forgery; the catacombs, with all their tombstones, are also a forgery; and the hundred monuments in Rome, with the traces of early Christianity graven upon them, are also a forgery; and the person or persons who forged Christianity, in order to give currency to their forgery, must have been at the incredible pains of building the arch of Titus, and chiselling out its sculpture work; they must have dug out the catacombs, and filled them, with infinite labour, with forged tombstones; and they must have covered the monuments of Rome with forged inscriptions. Would any one have been at the pains to have done all this, or could he have done it without being detected? When the Romans rose in the morning, and saw these forged inscriptions, they must have known that they were not there the day before, and would have exposed the trick. But the idea is absurd, and no man can seriously entertain it whom an inveterate scepticism has not smitten with the extreme of senility or idiotcy. There is far more evidence at Rome for the historic truth of Christianity than for the existence of Julius Cæsar or of Scipio, or of any of the great men whose existence no one ever takes it into his head to doubt.

Here, in the Forum, are THREE WITNESSES, which testify respectively to three leading facts of Christianity. These witnesses are,—the Arch of Titus, the fallen Palace on the Palatine, and the Column of Phocas. The Arch of Titus proclaims the end of the Old Testament economy; for there, graven on its marble, is the record of the fall of the temple, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation. The ruin on the Palatine tells that the “let” which hindered the revelation of the Man of Sin has now been “taken out of the way,” as Paul foretold; for there lies the prostrate throne of the Cæsars, which, while it stood, effectually forbade the rise of the popes. But this solitary pillar, which stands erect where so many temples have fallen, with what message is it freighted? It witnesses to the rise of Antichrist. That column rose with the popes; for Phocas set it up to commemorate the assumption of the title of Universal Bishop by the pastor of Rome; and here has it been standing all the while, to proclaim that “that wicked” is now revealed, “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.”

[Pg 299]

[Pg 300]

[Pg 301]

Such is the united testimony borne by these three Witnesses,—even that the Antichrist is come.

To complete this *coup d'œil* of Rome, it is necessary only that we transfer our gaze for an instant to the more distant objects. Though swept, as the site of Rome now is, with the besom of destruction, the outlines, which no ruin can obliterate, are yet grand as ever. Immediately beneath you are the red roofs and glittering domes of the city; around is a gay fringe of vineyards and gardens; and beyond is the dark bosom of the Campagna, stretching far and wide, meeting the horizon on the west and south, and confined on the east and north by a wall of glorious hills,—the sweet Volscians, the blue Sabines, the craggy Apennines, with their summits—at least when I saw them—hoary with the snows of winter. Spectacle terrible and sublime! Ruin colossal and unparalleled! The Campagna is a vast hall, amid the funereal shadows and unbroken stillness of which repose in mournful state the ASHES OF ROME.

CHAPTER XXIII.

[Pg 302]

STRIKING OBJECTS IN ROME.

The Baths of Caracalla—The Catacombs—Evidence thence arising against Romanism—The Scala Santa, or Pilate's Stairs—Peasants from Rimini climbing them—Irreverence of Devotees—Unequal Terms on which the Pope offers Heaven—Church of Ara Cæli—The Santissimo Bambino—Conversation with the Monks who exhibit it—The Ghetto, or Jew's Quarter—Efforts to Convert them to Romanism—Tyrannical Restrictions still imposed upon them—Their Ineradicable Characteristics of Race—The Vatican—The Apollo Belvedere—Pio Nono—His Dress and Person—St Peter's—Its Grandeur and Uselessness—Motto on Egyptian Obelisk—Gate of San Pancrazio—Graves of the French—The Convents—Exhibition of Nuns—Collegio Romano and Father Perrone—An American Student—The English Protestant Chapel—Preaching there—American Chaplain—Collection in Rome for Building a Cathedral in London—Sermon on Immaculate Conception in Church of Gesu—Ave Maria—Family Worship in Hotel—Early Christians of Rome—Paul.

I HAVE already mentioned my arrival at midnight, and how thankful I was to find an open door and an empty bed at the Hotel d'Angleterre. The reader may guess my surprise and joy at discovering next morning that I had slept in a chamber adjoining that of my friend Mr Bonar, from whom I had parted, several weeks before, at Turin. After breakfast, we sallied out to see the Catacombs. I had found Rome in cloud and darkness on the previous night; and now, after a deceitful morning gleam, the storm returned with greater violence than ever. Torrents swept the streets; the lightning was flashing on the old monuments; fearful peals of thunder were rolling above the city; and we were compelled oftener than once during our ride to seek the shelter of an arched way from the deluge of rain that poured down upon us. Skirting the base of the Palatine, and emerging on the Via Appia, we arrived at the Baths of Caracalla, which we had resolved to visit on our way to the Catacombs. No words can describe the ghastly grandeur of this stupendous ruin, which, next to the Coliseum, is the greatest in Rome. Besides its saloons, theatre, and libraries, it contained, it is said, sixteen hundred chairs for bathers. As was its pristine splendour, so now is its overthrow. Its cyclopean walls, and its vast chambers, the floors of which are covered to the depth of some twelve or twenty feet with fallen masses of the mosaic ceiling, like immense boulders which have rolled down from some mountain's top, are spread over an area of about a mile in circuit. The ruins, here capped with sward and young trees, there rising in naked jagged turrets like Alpine peaks, had a romantic effect, which was not a little heightened by the alternate darkness of the thunder-cloud that hung above them, and the incessant play of the lightning among their worn pinnacles.

[Pg 303]

Resuming our course along the Appian Way, we passed the tomb of the Scipios; and, making our exit by the Sebastian gate, we came, after a ride of two miles in the open country, to the basilica of San Sebastiano, erected over the entrance to the Catacombs. Pulling a bell which hung in the vestibule, a monk appeared as our cicerone, and we might have been pardoned a little misgiving in committing ourselves to such a guide through the bowels of the earth. His cloak was old and tattered, his face was scourged with scorbutic disease, misery or flagellation had worn him to the bone, and his restless eye cast uneasy glances on all around. He carried in his hand a little bundle of tallow candles, as thin and worn as himself almost; and, having lighted them, he gave one to each of us, and bade us follow. We descended with him into the doubtful night. The place was a long shaft or corridor, dug out of the brown tufo rock, with the roof about two feet overhead, and the breadth two thirds or so of the height. The descent was easy, the turnings frequent, and light there was none, save the glimmerings of our slender tapers. The origin of the Catacombs is still a disputed question; but the most probable opinion is, that they were formed by digging out the pozzolana or volcanic earth, which was used as a cement in the great buildings of Rome. They extend in a zone round the city, and form a labyrinth of subterranean galleries, which traverse the Campagna, reaching, according to some, to the shore of the Mediterranean. He who adventures into them without a guide is infallibly lost. They speak at Rome of a professor and his students, to the number of sixty, who entered the Catacombs fifty years ago, and have not yet returned. Certain it is, that many melancholy accidents have occurred in them, which have

[Pg 304]

induced the Government to wall them up to a certain extent. I had not gone many yards till I felt that I was entirely at the mercy of the monk, and that, should he play me false, I must remain where I was till doomsday.

But what invests the Catacombs with an interest of so touching a kind is the fact, that here the Christian Church, in days of persecution, made her abode. What! in darkness, and in the bowels of the earth? Yes: such were the Christians which that age produced. At every few paces along the galleries you see the quadrangular excavations in which the dead were laid. There, too, are the niches in which lamps were placed, so needful in the subterranean gloom; and occasionally there opens to your taper a large square chamber, with its walls of dark-brownish tuffo and its stuccoed roof, which has evidently been used for family purposes, or as a chapel. How often has the voice of prayer and praise resounded here! The Catacombs are a stupendous monument of the faith and constancy of the primitive Church. You have the satisfaction here of knowing that you have the very scenes before you that met the eyes of the first Christians. Time has not altered them; superstition has not disfigured them. Such as they were when the primitive believers fled to them from a Nero's cruelty or a Domitian's tyranny, so are they now.

[Pg 305]

These remarkable excavations were well known down till the sixth century. Amid the barbarism of the ages that succeeded, all knowledge of them was lost; but in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the art of printing had been invented, and the world could profit by the discovery, the Catacombs were re-opened. Most of the gravestones were removed to the Vatican, and built into the *Lapidaria Galleria*, where I spent a day copying them; but so accurately have they been described by Maitland, in his "Church in the Catacombs," that I beg to refer the reader who wishes farther information respecting these deeply interesting memorials, to his valuable work. They are plain, unchiselled slabs of marble, with simple characters, scratched with some sharp instrument by the aid of the lamp, recording the name and age of the person whose remains they enclosed, to which is briefly added, "in peace," or "in Christ." Piety here is to be tested, not by the profession on the tombstone, but by the sacrifice of the life. A palm branch carved on the stone is the usual sign of martyrdom. I saw a few slabs still remaining as they had been placed seventeen centuries ago, fastened into the tuffo rock with a cement of earth. When the Catacombs were opened, a witness rose from the dead to confront Rome. No trace has been discovered which could establish the slightest identity in doctrine, in worship, or in government, between the present Church of Rome and the Church of the Catacombs.

[Pg 306]

Will the reader accompany me to another and very different scene? We leave these midnight vaults, and tread again the narrow lava-paved Appian road; and through rural lanes we seek the summit of the Cælian mount, where stands in statued pomp the church of St John Lateran. Here are shown the *Scala Santa* which were brought from Jerusalem, and which the Church of Rome certifies as the very stairs which Christ ascended when he went to be judged of Pilate. On the north side of the quadrangle is an open building, with three separate flights of steps leading up from the pavement to the first floor. The middle staircase, which is covered with wood to preserve the marble, is the *Scala Santa*, which it is lawful to ascend only on your knees. Having reached the top, you may again use your feet, and descend by either of the other two stairs. Placed against the wall at the foot of the *Scala Santa*, is a large board, with the conditions to be observed in the ascent. Amongst other provisions, no one is allowed to carry a cane up the *Scala Santa*, nor is dog allowed to set foot on these stairs. On the pavement stood a sentry-box; and in the box sat a little dark-visaged man, so very withered, so very old, and so very crabbed, that I almost was tempted to ask him whether he had been imported along with the stairs. He rattled his little tin-box violently, which seemed half full of small coins, and invited me to ascend. "What shall I have for doing so?" I asked. "Fifteen years' indulgence," was the instant reply. There might be about fifteen steps in the stair, which was at the rate of a year's indulgence for every step. The terms were fair; for with an ordinary day's work I might lay up some thousands of years' indulgence. There was but one drawback in the matter. "I don't believe in purgatory," I rejoined. "What is that to me?" said the old man, tartly, accompanying the remark with a quick shrug of the shoulders and a curl of his thin lip.

[Pg 307]

I turned to the staircase. Three peasant lads from Rimini—where the Madonna still winks, and good Catholic hearts still believe—were piously engaged in laying up a stock of merit against a future day, on the *Scala Santa*. Swinging the upper part of their bodies, and holding their feet aloft lest their wooden-soled shoes should touch the precious marble, or rather its wooden casing, they were slowly making way on the steps. In a little they were joined by a Frenchman, with his wife and little daughter; and the whole began a general march up the staircase. Whether it was the greater vigour of their piety, or the greater vigour of their limbs, I know not; but the peasants had flung themselves up before the lady had mastered five steps of the course. It occurred to me that this way of earning heaven was not one that placed all on a level, as they should be. These strong sinewy lads were getting fifteen years' indulgence with no greater effort than it cost the lady to earn five. The party, on reaching the top, entered a room on the right, and dropt on their knees before a little box of bones which stood in one corner, then before a painting of the Saviour which hung in the other; muttered a few words of prayer; and, descending the lateral stairs, commenced over again the same process. In no time they had laid up at least a hundred years' indulgence a-piece. The Frenchman and his lady went through the operation with a grave face; but the peasants quite lost the mastery over theirs, and the building rung with peals

[Pg 308]

of laughter at the ridiculous attitudes into which they were compelled to throw themselves. Even in the little chapel above, bursts of smothered merriment interrupted their prayers. I looked at the little man in the box, to see how he was taking it; but he was true to his own remark, "What is that to me?" Indeed, this behaviour by no means detracted from the merit of the deed, or shortened by a single day the term of indulgence, in the estimation of the Italians. *Their* understanding of devotion and *ours* are totally different. With us devotion is a mental act; with them it is a mechanical act, strictly so. The mind may be absent, asleep, dead; it is devotion nevertheless. These peasants had undertaken to climb Pilate's staircase on their knees; not to give devout or reverent feelings into the bargain: they had done all they engaged to do, and were entitled to claim their hire. The staircase, as my readers may remember, has a strange connection with the Reformation. One day, as Luther was dragging his body up these steps, he thought he heard a voice from heaven crying to him, *The just shall live by faith*. Amazed, he sprang to his feet. New light entered into him. Luther and the Reformation were advanced a stage.

From the Scala Santa in the Lateran I went to see the Santissimo Bambino in the church of Ara Cæli, on the Capitol. This church is squatted on the spot where stood the temple of Jupiter Ferretrius of old. It is one of the largest churches in Rome, and is unquestionably the ugliest. A magnificent staircase of an hundred and twenty-four steps of Parian marble leads up to it; but the church itself is as untasteful as can well be imagined. It presents its gable to the spectator, which is simply a vast unadorned expanse of brick, the breadth greatly exceeding the height, and terminating a-top in a sort of coping, that looks like a low, broad chimney, or rather a dozen chimneys in one. The edifice always reminded me of a short, stout Quaker, with a brim of even more than the usual breadth, standing astride on the Capitol. Entering by the main doorway in the west, I passed along the side aisle, on my way to the little chapel near the altar where the Bambino is kept. The wall here was covered with little pictures in thousands, all in the homeliest style of the art, and representing persons falling into the sea, or tumbling over precipices, or ridden over by carts. These were votive offerings from persons who had been in the situations represented, and who had been saved by the special interposition of Mary. Arms, legs, and heads of brass, and in some instances of silver, bore testimony to the greater wealth or the greater devotion of others of the devotees. Passing through a door on the left, at the eastern extremity of the church, I entered the little chapel or side closet, in which the Bambino is kept. Here two barefooted monks, with not more than the average dirt on their persons, were in attendance, to show me the "god." They began by lighting a few candles, though the sunlight was streaming in at the casement. I was near asking the monks the same question which the Protestant inhabitants of a Hungarian village one day put to their Catholic neighbours, as they were marching in procession through their streets,—*"Is your god blind, that you burn candles to him at mid-day?"* The tapers lighted, one of the friars dropped on his knees, and fell to praying with great vigour. I fear my deportment was not so edifying as the place and circumstances required; for I could see that ever and anon the monk cast side-long glances at me, as at a man who was scarce worthy of so great a sight as was about to be shown him. The other monk, drawing a key from under his cloak, threw open the doors of a sort of cupboard that stood against the wall. The interior was fitted up not unlike the stage of a theatre. A tall figure, covered with a brown cloak, stood leaning on a staff in the foreground. By his side stood a female, considerably younger, and attired in an elegant robe of green. These two regarded with fixed looks a little cradle or casket at their feet. The background stretched away into a hilly country, amid whose knolls and dells were shepherds with their flocks. The figures were Joseph and Mary, and the vista beyond was meant to represent the vicinity of Bethlehem. Taking up the casket, the monk, with infinite bowings and crossings, undid its swathings, and solemnly drew forth the Bambino. Poor little thing! it was all one to it whether one or a hundred candles were burning beside it: it had eyes, but saw not. It was bandaged, as all Italian children are, from head to foot, the swathings enveloping both arms and legs, displaying only its little feet at one extremity, and its round chubby face at the other. But what a blaze! On its little head was a golden crown, burning with brilliants; and from top to toe it was stuck so full of jewels, that it sparkled and glittered as if it had been but one lustrous gem throughout.

Two women, who had taken the opportunity of an Englise visiting the idol, now entered, leading betwixt them a little child, and all three dropped on their knees before the Bambino. I begged the monk to inform me why these women were here on their knees, and praying. "They are worshipping the Bambino," he replied. "Oh! worshipping, are they?" I exclaimed, in affected surprise; "how stupid I am; I took it for a piece of wood." "And so it is," rejoined the monk; "but it is miraculous; it is full of divine virtue, and works cures." "Has it wrought any of late?" I inquired. "It has," replied the religioso; "it cured a woman of dropsy two weeks ago." "In what quarter of Rome did she live?" I asked. "She lived in the Vatican," replied the Franciscan. "We have some great doctors in the city I come from," I said; "we have some who can take off an arm, or a leg, or a nose, without your feeling the slightest pain; but we have no doctor like this little doctor. But, pray tell me, why do you permit the cardinals or the Pope ever to die, when the Bambino can cure them?" The monk turned sharply round, and gave me a searching stare, which I stood with imperturbable gravity; and then, taking me for either a very dull or a very earnest questioner, he proceeded to explain that the cure did not depend altogether on the power of the Bambino, but also somewhat on the faith of the patient. "Oh, I see how it is," I replied. "But pardon me yet farther; you say the Bambino is of wood, and that these honest women are praying to it. Now I

[Pg 309]

[Pg 310]

[Pg 311]

have been taught to believe that we ought not to worship wood." To make sure both of my interrogatories and of the monk's answers, I had been speaking to him through my friend Mr Stewart, whose long residence in Rome had made him perfectly master of the Italian tongue. "Oh," replied the Franciscan, "*all Christians here worship it.*" But now the signs had become very manifest that my inquiries had reached a point beyond which it would not be prudent to push them. The monk was getting very red in the face; his motions were growing quick and violent; and, with more haste than reverence, he put back his god into its crib, and prepared to lock it up in its press. His fellow monk had started to his feet, and was rapidly extinguishing the candles, as if he smelt the unwholesome air of heresy. The women were told to be off; and the exhibition closed with somewhat less show of devotion than it had opened.

Here, by the banks of the Tiber, as of old by the Euphrates, sits the captive daughter of Judah; and I went one afternoon towards twilight to visit the Ghetto. It is a narrow, dark, damp, tunnel-like lane. Old Father Tiber had been there but a day or two previously, and had left, as usual, very distinct traces of his visit, in the slime and wet that covered the place. Formerly it was shut in with gates, which were locked every night at Ave Maria: now the gates are gone, and the broken and ragged door-posts show where they had hung. Opposite the entrance of the Ghetto stands a fine church, with a large sculpture-piece over its portal, representing a crucifix, surrounded with the motto, which meets the eye of the Jew every time he passes out or comes in, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a gainsaying and disobedient people." The allusion here, no doubt, is to their unwillingness to pay their taxes, for that is the only sense in which the Pope's hands are all day long stretched out towards this people. Recently Pio Nono contracted a loan for twenty-one millions of francs, with the house of Rothschild; and thus, after persecuting the race for ages, the Vicar of God has come to lean for the support of his tottering throne upon a Jew. To do the Pope justice, however, the Jews in Rome are gathered once a-year into a church, where a sermon is preached for their conversion. The spectacle is said to be a very edifying one. The preacher fires off from the pulpit the hardest hits he can; and the Jews sit spitting, coughing, and making faces in return; while a person armed with a long pole stalks through the congregation, and admonishes the noisiest with a firm sharp rap on the head. The scene closes with a baptism, in which, it is affirmed, the same Jew sometimes plays the same part twice, or oftener if need be.

The tyrannical spirit of Popery is seen in the treatment to which these descendants of Abraham are subjected in Rome, down to the present hour. Inquisitors are appointed to search into and examine all their books; all Rabbinic works are forbidden them, the Old Testament in Hebrew only being allowed to them; and any Jew having any forbidden book in his possession is liable to the confiscation of his property. Nor is he permitted to converse on the subject of religion with a Christian. They are not permitted to bury their dead with religious pomp, or to write inscriptions on their tombstones; they are forbidden to employ Christian servants; and if they do anything to disturb the faith of a Jewish convert to Romanism, they are subject to the confiscation of all their goods, and to imprisonment with hard labour for life; they are not allowed to sell meat butchered by themselves to Christians, nor unleavened bread, under heavy penalties; nor are they permitted to sleep a night beyond the limits of their quarters, nor to have carriage or horses of their own, nor to drive about the city in carriages, nor to use public conveyances for journeying, if any one object to it.

Enter the Ghetto, and you feel instantly that you are among another race. An indescribable languor reigns over the rest of Rome. The Romans walk the streets with their hands in their pockets, and their eyes on the ground, for a heavy heart makes the limbs to drag. But in the Ghetto all is activity and thrift. You feel as if you had been suddenly transported into one of the busiest lanes of Glasgow or Manchester. Eager faces, with keen eyes and sharp features, look out upon you from amid the bundles of clothes and piles of all kinds of articles which darken the doors and windows of their shops. Scarce have you crossed the threshold of the Ghetto when you are seized by the button, dragged helplessly into a small hole stuffed with every imaginable sort of merchandise, and invited to buy a dozen things at once. No sooner have you been let go than you are seized by another and another. The women were seated in the doors of their shops and dwellings, plying busily their needle. One fine Jewish matron I marked, with seven buxom daughters round her, all working away with amazing nimbleness, and casting only a momentary glance at the stranger as he passed. How inextinguishable the qualities of this extraordinary people! Here, in this desolate land, and surrounded by the overwhelming torpor and laziness of Rome, the Jews are as industrious and as intent on making gain as their brethren in the commercial cities of Britain. I drew up with a young lad of about twenty, by way of feeling the pulse of the Ghetto; but though I tried him on both the past and the present, I succeeded in striking no chord to which he would respond. He seemed one of the prophet's dried bones,—very dry. Seventy years did their fathers dwell by the Euphrates; but here, alas! has the harp of Judah hung upon the willow for eighteen centuries. Beneath the dark shadow of the Vatican do they ever think of the sunny and vine-clad hills of their Palestine?

I spent days not a few in the saloons of the Vatican. Into these noble chambers,—six thousand in number, it is said,—have been gathered all the masterpieces of ancient art which have been dug up from the ruins of villas, and temples, and basilicas, where they had lain buried for ages. Of course, I enter on no description of these. Let me only remark, that though I had seen

[Pg 312]

[Pg 313]

[Pg 314]

hundreds of copies of some of these sculptures,—the Apollo Belvedere and the Laocoon, for instance,—no copy I had ever seen had given me any but the faintest idea of the transcendent beauty and power of the originals. The artist, I found, had flung into them, without the slightest exaggeration of feature, a tremendous energy, an intense life, which perhaps no coming age will ever equal, and certainly none surpass. What a sublime, thrilling, ever-acting tragedy, for instance, is the Laocoon group! But from these efforts of a genius long since passed from the earth, I pass to one who represents in his living person a more tragical drama than any depicted in marble in the halls of the Vatican. One day as I was wandering through these apartments, the rumour ran through them that the Pope was going out to take an airing. I immediately ran down to the piazza, where I found a rather shabby coach with red wheels, to which were yoked four coal-black horses, with a very fat coachman on the box, in antique livery, and two postilions astride the horses, waiting for Pius. Some half-dozen of the *guardia nobile*, mounted on black horses, were in attendance; and, loitering at the bottom of the stairs, were the stately forms of the Swiss guards, with their shining halberds, and their quaint striped dress of yellow and purple. I had often heard of the Pope in the symbols of the Apocalypse, and in the pages of history as the antichrist; and now I was to see him with the eye in the person of Pio Nono. After waiting ten minutes or so, the folding doors in an upper gallery of the piazza were thrown open, and I could see a head covered with a white skull-cap,—the Popes never wear a wig,—passing along the corridor, just visible above the stone ballustrade. In a minute the Pope had descended the stairs, and was advancing along the open pavement to his carriage. The Swiss guard stood to their halberds. A Frenchman and his lady,—the same, if I mistake not, whom I had seen on the Scala Santa,—spreading his white handkerchief on the causeway, uncovered and dropped on his knees; a row of German students in red gowns went down in like manner; a score or so of wretched-looking old men, who were digging up the grass in the piazza, formed a prostrate group in the middle; and a little knot of Englishmen,—some four of us only,—stood erect at about six yards from the line of the procession.

[Pg 315]

[Pg 316]

Pio Nono, though king of the kings of the earth, was attired with severe simplicity. His sole dress, save the skull-cap I have mentioned, and red slippers, was a gown of white stuff, which enveloped his whole person from the neck downwards, and looked not unlike a camlet morning dressing-gown. A small cross which dangled on his breast was his only ornament. The fisherman's ring I was too far off to see. In person he is a portly, good-looking gentleman; and, could one imagine him entering the pulpit of a Scotch Secession congregation, or an English Methodist one, his appearance would be hailed with looks of satisfaction. His colour was fresher than the average of Italy; and his face had less of the priest in it than many I have seen. There was an air of easy good nature upon it, which might be mistaken for benevolence, blended with a smile, which appeared ever on the point of breaking into a laugh, and which utterly shook the spectator's confidence in the firmness and good faith of its owner. Pius stooped slightly; his gait was a sort of amble; there was an air of irresolution over the whole man; and one was tempted to pronounce,—though the judgment may be too severe,—that he was half a rogue, half a fool. He waived his hand in an easy, careless way to the students and Frenchman, and made a profound bow to the English party.

St Peter's is close by: let us enter it. As among the Alps, so here at first, one is altogether unaware of the magnitudes before him. What strikes you on entering is the vast sweep of the marble floor. It runs out before you like a vast plain or strath, and gives you a colossal standard of measurement, which you apply unconsciously to every object,—the pillars, the statues, the roof; and though these are all colossal too, yet so nicely are they proportioned to all around them, that you take no note of their bulk. You pass on, and the grandeur of the edifice opens upon you. Beneath you are rows of dead popes; on either side rise gigantic statues and monuments which genius has raised to their memory; and in front is the high altar of the Roman world, towering to the height of a three-story house, yet looking, beneath that sublime roof, of only ordinary size. You are near the reputed tombs of Peter and Paul, before which an hundred golden lamps burn day and night. And now the mighty dome opens upon you, like the vault of heaven itself. You begin to feel the wondrous magnificence of the edifice in which you stand, and you give way to the admiration and awe with which it inspires you. But next moment comes the saddening thought, that this pile, unrivalled as it is among temples made with hands, is literally useless. There is no worship in it. Here the sinner hears no tidings of a free salvation. This temple but enshrines a wafer, and serves once or twice a-year as the scene of an idle pageant on the part of a few old men.

[Pg 317]

Nay, not only is it useless,—it is one of the strongholds which superstition has thrown up for perpetuating its sway over the world. You see these few poor people kneeling before these burning lamps. Their prayer is directed, not upwards through that dome to the heavens above it, but downwards into that vault where sleep, as they believe, the ashes of Peter and Paul. Rome has ever discouraged family worship, and taught men to pray in churches. Why? To increase the power of the Church and the priesthood. A country covered with households in which family worship is kept is like a country covered with fortresses;—it is impregnable. Every house is a citadel, and every family is a little army. Or mark yonder female who kneels before the perforated brazen lattice of yonder confessional-box. She is whispering her sins into the ear of a shaven priest, who receives them into his own black heart. It is but a reeking cess-pool, not a fountain of cleansing, to which she has come. Such are the uses of St Peter's,—a temple where the *Church* is

[Pg 318]

glorified at the expense of *religion*. Its high altar stops the way to the throne of grace, and its priest bars your access to a Redeemer's blood.

And how was this temple built? Romanists speak of it as a monument of the piety of the faithful. But what is the fact? Did it not come out of the foul box of Tetzels indulgence-monger? Every stone in it is representative of so much sin. With all its grandeur, it is but a stupendous monument of the follies and vices, the crimes and the superstition, of Christendom in the ages which preceded the Reformation. It has cost Rome dear. We do not allude to the twelve millions its erection is said to have cost, but to the mighty rent to which it gave rise in the Roman world. In the centre of the magnificent piazza of St Peter's stands an Egyptian obelisk, brought from Heliopolis, with the words graven upon it, "Christ reigns." Verily that is a great truth; and there are few spots where one feels its force so strongly as here. The successive paganisms of the world have been overruled as steps in the world's progress. Their corruptions have been based upon certain great truths, which they have written, as it were, upon the general mind of the world. The paganism which flourished where that column was hewn was an admission of *God's existence*, though it strove to divert attention from the truth on which it was founded, by the multitude of false gods which it invented. In like manner, the paganism that flourishes, or rather that is fading, where this column now stands, is an admission of the *necessity of a Mediator*; though it strives, as its predecessor did, to hide this glorious truth under a cloud of spurious mediators. But we see in this how every successive move on the part of idolatry has in reality been a retreat. Truth is gradually advancing its parallels against the citadel of error, and the world is toiling slowly upward to its great rest. Thus Christ shows that He reigns.

[Pg 319]

From this silent prophet at the Pope's door, let us skirt along the Janiculum, to the gate of San Pancrazio. The site is a commanding one; and you look down into the basin in which Rome reposes, where many a cupola, and tower, and pillared façade, rises proudly out of the red roofs that cover the Campus Martius. If it is toward sunset, you can see the sheen of the villas which are sprinkled over the Sabine and Volscian hills, and are much struck with the fine amphitheatre which the mountains around the city form. What must have been the magnificence of ancient Rome, with her seven hills, and her glorious Campagna, with such a mountain-wall! But let us mark the old gate. It was here that the struggle betwixt the French and the Romans took place in 1849. The wall is here of brick,—very old, and of great breadth; and if struck with a cannon ball, it would crumble into dust by inches, but not fall in masses: hence the difficulty which the French found of breaching it. The towers of the gate are dismantled, and the top of the wall for some thirty yards is of new brick; but, with these exceptions, no other traces remain of the bloody conflict which restored the Pope to his throne. Of old, when Dagon fell, and the human head rolled in one direction and the fishy tail lay in another, "they took Dagon," we are told, and, fastening together the dissevered parts, "they set him in his place again." Idol worshippers are the same in all ages. Oftener than once has the Dagon of the Seven Hills fallen; the crown has rolled in one direction; the "palms of his hands" have been seen in another; and only the sacerdotal stump has remained; but the kings of Europe have taken Dagon, and, by the help of bayonets, have "set him in his place again;" and, having set up *him* who could not set up himself, have worshipped him as the prop of their own power. What I had come hither to see especially was the graves of those who had fallen. On the left of the road, outside the gate, I found a grassy plateau, of some half-dozen acres, slightly furrowed, but bearing no such indications as I expected to find of such carnage as had here taken place. A Roman youth was sauntering on the spot; and, making up to him, I asked him to be so good as show me where they had buried the Frenchmen. "Come along," said he, "and I will show you the French." We crossed the plateau in the direction of a vineyard, which was enclosed with a stone-wall. The gate was open, and we entered. Stooping down, the youth laid hold on a whitish-looking nodule, of about the size of one's fist, and, holding it out to me, said, "that, Signor, is part of a Frenchman." I thought at first the lad was befooling me; but on examining the substance, I found that it was animal matter calcined, and had indeed formed part of a human being. The vineyard for acres and acres was strewn with similar masses. I now saw where the French were buried. The siege took place in the heat of summer; and every evening, when the battle was over, the dead were gathered in heaps, and burned, to prevent infection; and there are their remains to this day, manuring the vineyards around the walls. I wonder if the evening breezes, as they blow over the Janiculum, don't waft across the odour to the Vatican.

[Pg 320]

Let us descend the hill, and re-enter the city. There is a class of buildings which you cannot fail to note, and which at first you take to be prisons. They are large, gloomy-looking houses, of from three to four stories, with massive doors, and windows closed with strong upright iron stanchions, crossed with horizontal bars, forming a network of iron of so close a texture, that scarce a pigeon could squeeze itself through. Ah, there, you say, the brigand or the Mazzinist groans! No; the place is a convent. It is the dwelling, not of crime, but of "heavenly meditation." The beings that live there are so perfectly happy, so glad to have escaped from the evil world outside, and so delighted with their paradise, that not one of them would leave it, though you should open these doors, and tear away these iron bars. So the priests say. Is it not strange, then, to confine with bolt and bar beings who intend anything but escape? and is it not, to say the least, a needless waste of iron, in a country where iron is so very scarce and so very dear? It would be worth while making the trial, if only for a summer's day, of opening these doors, and astonishing Rome with the great amount of happiness within it, of which, meanwhile, it has not the least idea.

[Pg 321]

I have seen the dignitaries entering, but no glimpse could I obtain of the interior; for immediately behind the strong outer door is an inner one, and how many more I know not. Mr Seymour has told us of a nun, while he was in Rome, who found her way out through all these doors and bars; but, instead of fleeing back into her paradise, she rushed straight to the Tiber, and sought death beneath its floods.

But although I never was privileged to see the interior of a Roman convent, I saw on one occasion the inmates of these paradises. During my sojourn in that city, it was announced that the nuns of a certain convent were to sing at Ave Maria, in a church adjoining the Piazza di Spagna; and I went thither to hear them. The choristers I did not see; they sat in a remote gallery, behind a screen. Their voices, which in clearness and brilliancy of tone surpassed the finest instruments, now rose into an overpowering melodious burst, and now died away into the sweetest, softest whispers. Within the low rail, their faces fronting the altar, and their backs turned on the audience, sat a row of spectres. Start not, reader; spectres they were,—fleshless, bloodless spectres. I saw them enter: they came like the sheeted dead; they wore long white dresses; their faces were pale and livid, like those that look out upon you from coffins; their forms were thin and wasted, and cast scarce a shadow as they passed between you and the beams of the sinking sun. Their eyes they lifted not, but kept them steadfastly fixed on the ground, over which they crept noiselessly as shadows creep. They sat mute and moveless, as if they had been statues of cold marble, all the while these brilliant notes were rolling above them. But I observed they were closely watched by the priests. There were several beside the altar; and whichever it was who happened for the moment to be disengaged, he turned round, and stood regarding the nuns with that stern anxious look with which one seeks to control a mastiff or a maniac. Were the priests afraid that, if withdrawn for a moment from the influence of their eye, a wail of woe would burst forth from these poor creatures? The last hallelujah had been pealed forth,—the shades of eve were thickening among the aisles,—when the priests gave the signal to the nuns. They rose, they moved; and, with eyes which were not lifted for a moment from the floor on which they trod, they disappeared by the same private door by which they had entered. I have seen gangs of galley slaves,—I have seen the husbands and sons of Rome led away manacled into banishment,—I have seen men standing beneath the gallows; but never did I see so woe-struck a group as this. Than have gone back with these nuns to their "paradise," as it is cruelly termed, I felt that I would rather have lain, where the lost nun is, in the Tiber.

Before visiting Italy, I had read and studied the lectures of Father Perrone, Professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Collegio Romano, and had had frequent occasion to mention his name in my own humble pages; for I had nowhere found so clear a statement of the views held by the Church of Rome on the important doctrine of Original Sin, as that given in the Father's writings, and few had spoken so plainly as he had done on the wickedness of toleration. Being in Rome, I was naturally desirous of seeing the Father, and hearing him prelect. Accompanied by a young Roman student, whose acquaintance I had the happiness to make, but whose name I do not here mention, I repaired one day to the Collegio Romano,—a fine quadrangular building; and, after visiting its library, in whose "dark unfathomed caves" lies full many a monkish gem, I passed to the class-room of Professor Perrone. It was a lofty hall, benched after the manner of our own class-rooms, and hung round with portraits of the Professor's predecessors in office,—at least I took them for such. A tall pulpit rose on the end wall, with a crucifix beside it. The students were assembling, and mustered to the number of about an hundred. They were raw-boned, seedy-looking lads, of from seventeen to twenty-two. They all wore gowns, the majority being black, but some few red. Had I been a rich man, and disposed to signalize my visit to the Collegio Romano by some appropriate gift, I would have presented each of its students with a bar of soap, with directions for its use. In a few minutes the Professor entered, wearing the little round cap of the Jesuits. With that quiet stealthy step (an unconscious struggle to pass from matter into spirit, and assume invisibility) which is inseparable from the order, Father Perrone walked up to the pulpit stairs, which, after doffing his cap, and muttering a short prayer before the crucifix, he ascended, and took his place. It may interest those who are familiar with his writings, to know that Father Perrone is a man of middle size, rather inclined to obesity, with a calm, pleasant, thoughtful face, which becomes lighted up, as he proceeds, with true Italian vivacity. His lecture for the day was on the Evidences; and of course it was not the heretics, but the infidels, whom he combated throughout. In the number of his students was a young Protestant American, whom I first met in the house of the Rev. Mr Hastings, the American chaplain, where I usually passed my Sabbath evenings. This young man had chalked out for himself the most extraordinary theological course I ever heard of. He had first of all gone through a full curriculum in one of the old orthodox halls of the United States; he had then passed into Germany, where he had taken a course of neology and philosophy; and now he had come to Rome, where he intended to finish off with a course of Romanism. I ventured to engage him in a conversation on what he had learned in Germany; but we had not gone far till both found that we had lost ourselves in a dark mist; and we were glad to lay hold on an ordinary topic, as a clue back to the daylight. The young divine purposed returning to his native land, and spending his days as a Presbyterian pastor.

Will the reader go back with me to the point where we began our excursion through Rome,—the Flaminian Gate? I invite the reader's special attention to a building on the right. It stands a few paces outside the gate. The building possesses no architectural attractions, but it is illustrative of a great principle. The first floor is occupied as a granary; the second floor is

occupied as a granary; the third floor,—how is it occupied,—the attic story? Why, it is the English Protestant Church! Here is the toleration which the Pope grants us in Rome. There are from six hundred to a thousand English subjects resident in Rome every winter; but they dare not meet within the walls to open the Bible, or to worship God as his Word enjoins. They must go out without the gate, as if they were evil-doers; they must climb the stairs of this granary, as if they meditated some deed of darkness; and only when they have got into this garret are they at liberty to worship God. The Pope comes, not in person, but in his cardinals and priests, to Britain; and he claims the right of building his mass-houses, and of celebrating his worship, in every town and village of our empire. We permit him to do so; for we will fight this great battle with the weapons of toleration. We disdain to stain our hands or tarnish our cause by any other: these we leave to our opponents. But when we go to Rome, and offer to buy with our money a spot of ground on which to erect a house for the worship of God, we are told that we can have—no, not a foot's-breadth. Why, I say, the gospel had more toleration in Pagan Rome, aye, even when Nero was emperor, than it has in Papal Rome under Pio Nono. When Christianity entered Rome in the person of the Apostle Paul, did the tyrant of the Palatine strike her dumb? By no means. For the space of two years, her still small voice ceased not to be heard at the foot of the Capitol. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house [in Rome], and received all that came in unto him; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Let any minister or missionary attempt to do so now, and what would be his fate? and what the fate of any Roman who might dare to visit him? Instant banishment to the one,—instant imprisonment to the other. The Pope has set up the symbol of intolerance and persecution at his gate. He has written over the portals of Rome, as Dante over the gates of hell, "All ye who enter here, abandon"—God.

[Pg 325]

[Pg 326]

I do not say that the place is incommodious internally. The stigma lies in the proscription put upon Protestant worship. It is held to be an abomination so foul, that it cannot be tolerated within the walls of Rome. And the same spirit which banishes the worship to a garret, would banish the worshipper to a prison, or condemn him to a stake, if it dared. The same principle that makes Rome lock her earthly gates against the Protestant now, makes her lock her heavenly gates against him eternally.

There are, however, annoyances of a palpable and somewhat ludicrous kind attending this expulsion of the Protestant worship beyond the walls. The granary to which I have referred adjoins the cattle and pig market. In Rome, although it is a mortal sin to eat the smallest piece of flesh on a Friday, it is no sin at all to buy and sell swine's flesh on a Sabbath. Accordingly, the pig-market is held on Sabbath; and it is customary to drive the animals into the back courts of the English meeting-house before carrying them to market. So I was informed, when at Rome, by a member of the English congregation. The uproar created by the animals is at times so great as to disturb the worshippers in the attic above, who have been under the necessity of putting their hands into their pockets, and buying food for the swine, in order to keep them quiet during the hours of divine service. Thus the English at Rome are able to conduct their worship with some degree of decorum only when both cardinals and swine are propitious. Should either be out of humour,—a thing conceivable to happen to the most obese cardinal and the sweetest-tempered pig,—the English have but little chance of quiet. Nor is that the worst of it. I read not long since in the public journals, a letter from a Romish dignitary,—Dr Cahill, if I mistake not,—who, with an immense amount of bravery, stated that there was no Roman Catholic country in the world where full toleration was not enjoyed; and that, as regarded Rome, any Roman might change his religion to-morrow with perfect impunity. He might adopt Protestantism or Quakerism, or any other ism he pleased, provided he could show that he was not acting under the compulsion of a bribe. But how stands the fact? I passed three Sabbaths in Rome; I worshipped each Sabbath in the English Protestant chapel; and what did I see at the door of that chapel? I saw two gendarmes, with a priest beside them to give them instructions. And why were they there? They were there to observe all who went in and out at that chapel; and provided a Roman had dared to climb these stairs, and worship with the English congregation, the gendarmes would have seized him by the collar, and dragged him to the Inquisition. So much for the liberty the poor Romans enjoy to change their religion. The writer of that letter with the same truth might have told the people of England that there is no such city as Rome in all the world.

[Pg 327]

I was much taken with the ministrations of the Rev. Francis B. Woodward, the resident chaplain, on hearing him for the first time. He looked like one whose heart was in his work, and I thought him evangelical, so far as the absence of all reference to what Luther has termed "the article of a standing or a falling Church" allowed me to form an opinion. But next Sabbath my confidence was sorely shaken. Mr Woodward was proceeding in a rich and sweetly pious discourse on the necessity of seeking and cultivating the gifts of the Spirit, and of cherishing the hope of glory, when, towards the middle of his sermon, the evangelical thread suddenly snapped. "How are we," abruptly asked the preacher, "to become the sons of God?" I answer, by baptism. By baptism we are made children of God and heirs of heaven. But should we fall from that happy state, how are we to recover it? I answer, by penance. And then he instantly fell back again into his former pious strain. I started as if struck, and looked round to see how the audience were taking it. But I could discover no sign that they felt the real significancy of the words they had just heard. It seemed to me that the English chaplain was outside the gate for the purpose of showing men in at it; and were I the Pope, instead of incurring the scandal of banishing him

[Pg 328]

beyond the walls, I would assign him one of the best of the many hundred empty churches in Rome. The Rev. Mr Hastings, the American chaplain, conducted worship in the dining-room of Mr Cass, the American Consul, to a little congregation of some thirty persons. He was a good man, and a sound Protestant, but lacked the peculiar qualities for such a sphere. He has since passed from Rome and the earth, and joined, I doubt not, albeit disowned as a heretic in the city in which he laboured, "the General Assembly and Church of the first-born" on high.

I have already mentioned that the priests boast that the Pope could say mass in a different church every day of the year. Nevertheless there is next to no preaching in Rome. In Italy they convert men, not by preaching sermons, but by giving them wafers to swallow,—not by conveying truth into the mind, but by lodging a little dough in the stomach. Hence many of their churches stand on hill-tops, or in the midst of swamps, where not a house is in sight. During my sojourn of three weeks, I heard but two sermons by Roman preachers. I was sauntering in the Forum one day, when, observing a little stream of paupers—(how could such go to the convents to beg if they did not go to sermon?)—flowing into the church of San Lorenzo, I joined in the procession, and entered along with them. At the door was a tin-box for receiving contributions for erecting a temple in London, where "their poor destitute fellow-countrymen might hear the true gospel." Were these "destitute fellow-countrymen" in Rome, the Pope would find accommodation for them in some one of his dungeons; but with the English Channel between him and them, he builds with paternal care a church for their use. We doubt not the exiles will duly appreciate his kindness. Every twentieth person or so dropped a little coin into the box as he passed in. A knot of some one or two hundreds was gathered round a wooden stage, on which a priest was declaiming with an exuberance of vehement gesture. On the right and left of him stood two hideous figures, holding candles and crucifixes, and enveloped from head to foot in sackcloth. They watched the audience through two holes in their masks; and I thought I could see a cowering in that portion of the crowd towards which the muffled figures chanced for the time to be turned. I felt a chilly terror creeping over me as the masks turned their great goggle eyes upon me; and accordingly withdrew.

[Pg 329]

The regular weekly sermon in Rome is that preached every Sabbath afternoon in the church of the Jesuits. This church is resplendent beyond all others in the Eternal City, in marbles and precious stones, frescoes and paintings. Here, too, in magnificent tombs, sleep St Ignatius, the founder of the order, and Cardinal Bellarmine, one of the "Church's" mightiest champions. Its ample roof might cover an assembly of I know not how many thousands. About half-way down the vast floor, on the side wall, stood the pulpit; and before it were set some scores of forms for the accommodation of the audience, which might amount to from four hundred to six hundred, chiefly elderly persons. At three o'clock the preacher entered the pulpit, and, having offered a short prayer in silence, he replaced on his head his little round cap, and flung himself into his theme. That theme was one then and still very popular (I mean with the preachers,—for the people take not the slightest interest in these matters) at Rome,—the Immaculate Conception. I can give only the briefest outline of the discourse; and I daresay that is all my readers will care for. In proof of the immunity of Mary from original sin, the preacher quoted all that St Jerome, and St Augustine, and a dozen fathers besides, had said on the point, with the air of a man who deemed these quotations quite conclusive. Had they related to the theory of eclipses, or been snatches from some old pagan poet in praise of Juno, the audience would have been equally well pleased with them. I looked when the father would favour his audience with a few proofs from St Matthew and St Luke; but his time did not permit him to go so far back. He next appealed to the miracles which the Virgin Mary had wrought. I expected much new information here, as my memory did not furnish me with any well-accredited ones; but I was somewhat disappointed when the preacher dismissed this branch of his subject with the remark, that these miracles were so well known, that he need not specify them. Having established his proposition first from tradition, and next from miracles, the preacher wound up by declaring that the Immaculate Conception was a doctrine which all good Catholics believed, and which no one doubted save the children of the devil and the slaves of hell. The sermon seemed as if it had been made to answer exactly the poet's description:—

[Pg 330]

"And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swollen with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf, with privy paw,
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed;
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

[Pg 331]

When this edifying sermon was ended, "Ave Maria" began. A train of white-robed priests entered, and gathered in a cloud round the high altar. The organ sent forth its thunder; the flashing censers shot upwards to the roof, and, as they rose and fell, emitted fragrant wreaths of incense. The crowd poured in, and swelled the assembly to some thousands; and when the priests began to chant, the multitude which now covered the vast floor dropped on their knees, and joined in the hymn to the Virgin. This service, of all I witnessed in Rome, was the only one that partook in

the slightest degree of the sublime.

I must except one other, celebrated in an upper chamber, and *truly* sublime. It was my privilege to pass my first Sabbath in Rome in the society of the Rev. John Bonar and that of his family, and at night we met in Mr Bonar's room in the hotel, and had family worship. I well remember that Mr Bonar read on this occasion the last chapter of that epistle which Paul "sent by Phebe, servant of the Church at Cenchrea," to the saints at Rome. The disciples to whom the Apostle in that letter sends greetings had lived in this very city; their dust still slept in its soil; and were they to come back, I felt that, if I were a real Christian, we would recognise each other as dear brethren, and would join together in the same prayer; and as their names were read out, I was thrilled and melted, as if they had been the names of beloved and venerated friends but newly dead:—"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus; who have for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles, approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' *household*. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the *household* of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them."

[Pg 332]

Uppermost in my mind, in all my wanderings in and about Rome, was the glowing fact that here Paul had been, and here he had left his ineffaceable traces. I touched, as it were, scriptural times and apostolic men. Had he not often climbed this Capitol? Had not his feet pressed, times without number, this lava-paved road through the Forum? These Volscian and Sabine mountains, so lovely in the Italian sunlight, had often had his eye rested upon them! I began to love the soil for his sake, and felt that the presence of this one holy man had done more to hallow it than all that the long race of emperors and popes had done to desecrate it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

[Pg 333]

INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM ON TRADE.

The Church the Destroyer of the Country—The Pontifical Government just the Papacy in Action—That Government makes Men *Beggars, Slaves, Barbarians*—Influence of Pontifical Government on Trade—Iron—Great Agent of Civilization—Almost no Iron in Papal States—The Church has forbidden it—Prohibitive Duties on Iron—Machinery likewise prohibited—Antonelli's Extraordinary Note—Paucity of Iron-Workmen and Mechanics in the Papal States—Barbarous Aspect of the Country—Roman Ploughs—Roman Carts—How Grain is there Winnowed—Husbandry of Italy—Its Cabins—Its Ragged Population—Its Farms—Ruin of its Commerce—Isolation of Rome—Reasons why—Proposed Railway from Civita Vecchia to Ancona—Frustrated by the Government—Wretched Conveyance of Merchandise—Pope's Steam Navy—Papal Custom-houses—Bribery—Instances.

It is time to concentrate my observations, and to make their light converge around that evil system that sits enthroned in this old city. Of all the great ruins in Italy, the greatest by far is the Italians themselves. The ruin of the Italians I unhesitatingly lay at the door of the Church;—she is the nation's destroyer. When I first saw the Laocoon in the Vatican, I felt that I saw the symbol of the country;—there was Italy writhing in the folds of the great Cobra di Capella, the Papacy.

I cannot here go into the ceremonies practised at Rome, and which present so faithful a copy, both in their forms and in their spirit, of the pagan idolatry. Nor can I speak of the innumerable idols of gold and silver, wood and stone, with which their churches are crowded, and before which you may see votaries praying, and priests burning incense, all day long. Nor can I speak of the endless round of fêtes and festivals which fill up the entire year, and by which the priests seek to dazzle, and, by dazzling, to delude and enthral, the Romans. Nor can I detain my readers with tales and wonders of Madonnas which have winked, and of the blind and halt which have been cured, which knaves invent and simpletons believe. Nor can I detail the innumerable frauds for fleecing the Romans;—money for indulgences,—money for the souls in purgatory,—money for eating flesh on Friday,—money for votive offerings to the saints. The church of the Jesuits is supposed to be worth a million sterling, in the shape of marbles, paintings, and statuary; and in this way the capital of the country is locked up, while not a penny can be had for making roads or repairing bridges, or promoting trade and agriculture. I cannot enter into these matters: I must confine my attention to one subject,—THE PONTIFICAL GOVERNMENT.

[Pg 334]

When I speak of the Pontifical Government, I just mean the Papacy. The working of the Papal Government is simply the working of the Papacy; for what is that Government, but just the

principles of the Papacy put into judicial gear, and employed to govern mankind? It is the Church that governs the Papal States; and as she governs these States, so would she govern all the earth, would we let her. The Pontifical Government is therefore the fairest illustration that can be adduced of the practical tendency and influence of the system. I now arraign the system in the Government. I am prepared to maintain, both on general principles, and on facts that came under my own observation while in Rome, that the Pontifical Government is the most flagitiously unjust, the most inexorably cruel, the most essentially tyrannical Government, that ever existed under the sun. It is the necessary, the unchangeable, the eternal enemy of liberty. I say, looking at the essential principles of the Papacy, that it is a system claiming infallibility, and so laying reason and conscience under interdict,—that it is a system claiming to govern the world, not *by* God, but *as* God,—that it is a system claiming supreme authority in all things spiritual, and claiming the same supreme authority, though indirectly, in all things temporal,—that it sets no limits to its jurisdiction, but, on the contrary, makes that jurisdiction to range indiscriminately over heaven, earth, and hell. Looking at these principles, which no Papist can deny to be the fundamental and vital elements of his system, I maintain that, if there be any one thing more than another ascertained and indisputable within the compass of man's knowledge, it is this, that the domination of a system like the Papacy is utterly incompatible with the enjoyment of a single particle of liberty on the part of any human being. And I now proceed to show, that the conclusion to which one would come, reasoning from the essential principles of this system, is just the conclusion at which he would arrive by observing the workings of this system, as exhibited at this day in Italy.

[Pg 335]

I shall arrange the facts I have to state under three heads:—*First*, Those that relate to the TRADE of the Roman States: *second*, Those that relate to the administration of JUSTICE: and *third*, Those that relate to EDUCATION and KNOWLEDGE. I shall show that the Pontifical Government is so conducted as regards Trade, that it can have no other effect than to make the Romans *beggars*. I shall show, in the second place, that the Pontifical Government is so conducted as regards Justice, that it can have no other effect than to make the Romans *slaves*. And I shall show, in the third place, that the Pontifical Government is so conducted as regards Education, that it can have no other effect than to make the Romans *barbarians*. This is the threefold result that Government is fitted to work out: this is the threefold result it has wrought out. It has made the Romans beggars,—it has made the Romans slaves,—it has made the Romans barbarians. Observe, I do not touch the religious part of the question. I do not enter on any discussion respecting Purgatory, or Transubstantiation, or the worship of the Virgin. I look simply at the bearings of that system upon man's temporal interests; and I maintain that, though man had no hereafter to provide for, and no soul to be saved, he is bound by every consideration to resist a system so destructive to the whole of his interests and happiness in time.

[Pg 336]

I come now to trace the workings of the Papacy on the Trade of the Papal States. But here I am met, on the threshold of my subject, by this difficulty, that I am to speak of what scarce exists; for so effectually has the Pontifical Government developed its influence in this direction, that it has all but annihilated trade in the Papal States. If you except the manufacture of cameos, Roman mosaics, a little painting and statuary, there is really no more trade in the country than is absolutely necessary to keep the people from starvation. The trade and industry of the Roman States are crushed to death under a load of monopolies and restrictive tariffs, invented by infallible wisdom for protecting, but, as it seems to our merely fallible wisdom, for sacrificing, the industry of the country.

Let us take as our first instance the Iron Trade. We all know the importance of iron as regards civilization. Civilization may be said to have commenced with iron,—to have extended over the earth with iron; and so closely connected are the two, that where iron is not, there you can scarce imagine civilization to be. It is by iron in the form of the plough that man subjugates the soil; and it is by iron in the form of the sword that he subjugates kingdoms. What would our country be without its iron,—without its railroads, its steam-ships, its steam-looms, its cutlery, its domestic utensils? Almost all the comforts and conveniences of civilized life are obtained by iron. You may imagine, then, the condition of the Papal States, when I state that iron is all but unknown in them. It is about as rare and as dear as the gold of Uphaz. And why is it so? There is abundance of iron in our country; water-carriage is anything but expensive; and the iron manufacturers of Britain would be delighted to find so good a market as Italy for their produce. Why, then, is iron not imported into that country? For this simple reason, that the Church has forbidden its introduction. Strange, that it should forbid so useful a metal where it is so much needed. Yet the fact is, that the Pope has placed its importation under an as stringent prohibition almost as the importation of heresy: perhaps he smells heresy and civilization coming in the wake of iron. The duty on the introduction of bar-iron is two baiocchi la libbra, equivalent to fifty dollars, or £12 10s., per ton; which is about twice the price of bar-iron in this country. This duty is prohibitive of course.

[Pg 337]

The little iron which the Romans possess they import mostly from Britain, in the form of pig-iron; and the absurdity of importing it in this form appears from the fact that there is no coal in the States to smelt it,—at least none has as yet been discovered: wood-char is used in this process. When the pig-iron is wrought up into bar-iron, it is sold at the incredible price of thirty-eight Roman scudi the thousand pounds, which is equivalent, in English money, to £23 15s. per

[Pg 338]

ton, or four times its price in Britain. The want of the steam-engine vastly augments the cost of its manufacture. There is a small iron-work at Terni, eighty miles from Rome, which is set down there for the advantage of water-power, which is employed to drive the works. The whole raw material has to be carted from Rome, and, when wrought up, carted back again, adding enormously to the expense. There is another at Tivoli, also moved by water-power. The whole raw material has, too, to be carted from Rome, and the manufactured article carted back, causing an outlay which would soon more than cover the expense of steam-engine and fuel. At Terni some sixty persons are employed, including boys and men. The manager is a Frenchman, and most of the workmen are Frenchmen, with wages averaging from forty to fifty baiocchi; labourers at the works have from twenty-five to thirty baiocchi per day,—from a shilling to fifteenpence.

During the reign of Gregory XVI. machinery was admitted into the Papal States at a nominal duty, or one baiocchi the hundred Roman pounds. It is not in a day that a country like Italy can be taught the advantage of mechanical power. The Romans, like every primitive people, are apt to cleave to the rude, unhandy modes which they and their fathers have practised, and to view with suspicion and dislike inventions which are new and strange. But they were beginning to see the superiority of machinery, and to avail themselves of its use. A large number of hydraulic presses, printing presses, one or two steam-engines, a few threshing-mills, and other agricultural implements, were introduced under this nominal duty; and, had a little longer time been allowed, the country would have begun to assume somewhat of a civilized look. But Gregory died; and, as if to show the utter hopelessness of anything like progress on the part of the Pontifical Government, it was the present Pope who took the retrograde step of restoring the law shutting out machines. Cardinal Tosti, the Treasurer to Gregory's Government, was succeeded by his Excellenza Monsignor (now Cardinal) Antonelli, one of the earliest official acts of whom was the appending a note to the tariff on machinery, which subjected machines, all and sundry, to the duty imposed in the tariff on their component parts. For example, a machine composed of iron, brass, steel, and wood, according to Antonelli's note, would have to pay separate duty on each of the materials composing it. The way in which the thing was done is a fine sample of the spirit and style of papal legislation, and shows how the same subtle but perverted ingenuity, the same specious but hypocritical pretexts, with which the theological part of the system abounds, are extended also to its political and civil managements. Antonelli did not rescind the tariff; he but appended a note, the quiet but sure effect of which was to render it null. He did not tax machines as a whole; they were still free, viewed in their corporate capacity: he but taxed their individual parts. This ingenious legislator, by a saving clause, exempted from the operation of his note *machines of new invention*, which, after being proved to be such, were to be admitted at the nominal duty! What machines would not be of new invention in the Roman States, where there is absolutely no machinery, saving—with all reverence for the apostolic chamber—the guillotine?

[Pg 339]

But farther, Antonelli, to show at once his ingenuity and philanthropy, enacted that machines which had never before been introduced into the States should be admitted at the nominal duty. Mark the extent of the boon herein conferred on Italy. We shall suppose that one of each of the industrial and agricultural machines in use in Britain is admitted into the Roman States under this law. It is admitted duty-free. Well, but the second plough, or the second loom, or the second steam-engine, arrives. It must pay a prohibitive duty. It is not a new machine. You can make as many as you please from the one already introduced, says Antonelli. But who is to make them? There are no mechanics deserving the name in Rome; who, by the way, are the very people Antonelli said he meant to benefit. But, apart from the want of mechanical skill, there is the dearth of the raw material; for malleable iron was selling in Rome at upwards of £21 per ton, at a time when the cost of bar-iron in this country was only from £6 to £7 per ton. Such insane legislation on the part of the sacerdotal Government could not be committed through ignorance or stupidity. There must be some strong reason that does not appear at first sight for this wholesale sacrifice of the interests of the country. We shall speak of this anon: meanwhile we pursue our statement.

[Pg 340]

Antonelli supported his note,—that note which ratified the banishment of the arts from Italy, and gave barbarism an eternal infestation in the soil,—by affirming that it was passed in order to encourage l'*industria dello Stato*; which is as if one should say that he had cut his neighbour's throat to protect his life; for certainly Antonelli's note cut the throat of industry. Well, one would think, seeing this legislation was meant to protect the industry of the State and the interests of the iron-workmen, that these iron-workmen must be a large body. How many iron-workmen are there in the Papal States? An hundred thousand? One thousand? There are not more in all than one hundred and fifty! And for these one hundred and fifty iron-workmen (to which we may add the seventy cardinals, the most of whom are speculators in iron), the rest of the community is put beyond the pale of civilization, the ordinary arts and utensils are proscribed, improvement is at a stand-still, and the country is doomed to remain from age to age in barbarism.

[Pg 341]

And what is the aspect of the country? It is decidedly that of a barbarous land. Everything has an old-world look, as if it belonged to the era of the Flood. Iron being so enormously dear, its use is dispensed with wherever it is possible. Almost all implements of agriculture, of carriage, almost all domestic utensils, and many tools of trade, are made of wood. In consequence, they do very little work; and that little but indifferently well. Nothing could be more primitive than the *plough* of the Romans. It consists of a single stick or lever, fixed to a block having the form of a

sock or coulter, with a projection behind, on which the ploughman puts his foot, and assists the bullocks over a difficulty. The work done by this implement we would not call ploughing: it simply scratches the surface to the depth of some three or four inches, with which the poor husbandman is content. The soil is in general light, but it might be otherwise tilled; and, were it so, would yield far other harvests than those now known in Italy. Their *carts*, too, are of the rudest construction, and may be regarded as ingenious models of the form which should combine the largest bulk with the least possible use. They have high wheels, and as wide-set as those in our country, with nothing to fill the dreary space between but an uncouth-looking nut-shell of a box. The infallible Government of the Pope has not judged it beneath it to legislate in reference to them. They must be made of a certain prescribed capacity, and stamped for the purchase and sale of lime and pozzolano. In this happy country, all things, from the Immaculate Conception down to the pozzolano cart, are cared for by the sacerdotal Government. The open-bodied carts have bars (the length and distance apart of which are also regulated by the pontiff) placed on the trams, and are licensed for the sale of green wood, which must be sold at from three and a half to four dollars a load. The barozza is another open-bodied cart, with bars placed around the trams, and contains about twelve sacks of wood-char, which is sold at from eight to ten dollars. This is the fuel of the country, and, when kindled, does well enough for cooking. It gives considerable heat and but little smoke, but lacks the cheerfulness and comfort of an English fire-side, which is unknown in Rome.

[Pg 342]

Every agricultural process is conducted in the same rude and slovenly way. And how can it be otherwise, when the Church, for reasons best known to itself, denies the people the use of the indispensable instruments? It solemnly legislates that one British plough may be imported; and graciously permits its subjects, in a land where there are no mechanics, to make as many additional ploughs as they need. Is it not peculiarly modest in these men, who show so little wisdom in temporal matters, to ask the entire world to surrender its belief to them in things spiritual and divine?

Every one knows how we winnow corn in Britain. How do they conduct that process at Rome? A cart-load of grain is poured out on the barn-floor; some dozen or score of women squat down around it, and with the hand separate the chaff from the wheat, pickle by pickle. In this way a score of women may do in a week what a farmer in our country could do easily in a couple of hours. An effort was made to persuade the predecessor of the present Pontiff, Gregory XVI., to sanction the admission into Rome of a winnowing-machine. Its mode of working and uses were explained to the Pontiff. Gregory shook his head; for Infallibility indicates its doubts at times, just as mortals do, by a shake of the head. It was a dangerous thing to introduce into Rome, said the infallible Gregory. Perhaps it was; for if the Romans had begun to winnow grain, they might have learned to winnow other things besides grain.

[Pg 343]

The husbandry of Italy, as a system, is in a most backward state. Its cultivation is the cultivation of Ireland. And yet Italy is excelled by few countries on earth, perhaps by none, in point of its external defences, and its inexhaustible internal resources; which, however, under its present Government, are utterly wasted. On the north it is defended by the wall of the Alps, and on all its other sides by the ocean, whose bays offer boundless facilities for commerce. The plains of Lombardy are eternally covered with flowers and fruit. The valleys of Tuscany still boast the olive, the orange, and the vine. The wide waste of the Campagna di Roma is of the richest soil, and, spread out beneath the warm sun, might mingle on its surface the fruits of the torrid with those of the temperate zones. Instead of this, Italy presents to the traveller's eye a deplorable spectacle of wretched cabins, untilled fields, and a population oppressed by sloth and covered with rags. The towns are filled mostly with idlers and beggars. With all my inquiries, I could never get a clear idea of how they live. The alms-houses are numerous; for when a Government puts down trade, it must build hospitals and poor's-houses, or see its subjects die of starvation. In Rome, for example, besides the convents, where a number of poor people get a meal a day,—a sufficiently meagre one,—there is the government *Beneficenza*, which the more intelligent part account a great curse. Some fifteen hundred or two thousand persons, many of them able-bodied men, receive fifteen baiocchi,—sevenpence half-penny,—per day, in return for which they pouter about with barrows, removing earth from the old ruins, or cleaning the streets, which are none the cleaner, or picking grass in the square of the Vatican. Many deplorable tales are told in Rome of these people, and of the dire sacrifice made of the female portion of their families. But the grand resource is beggary, especially from foreigners; and if a beggar earn a penny a day, he will make a shift to live. He will purchase half a pound of excellent macaroni with the one baiocchi, and a few apples or grapes with the other; and thus he is provided for for the day. The inhabitants of these countries do not eat so substantially as we do. Should he earn nothing, he has it in his choice to steal or starve. This is the prolific source of brigandage and vagabondism.

[Pg 344]

In the country, the peasants (and there almost all are peasants) live by cultivating a small patch of land. The farms, like those in Ireland, are mere crofts. The proprietor, who lives in the city, provides not only the land, but the implements and cattle also, and in return receives a stipulated portion of the fruits. His share is often as high as a half, never lower than a fourth. The farmer is a tenant-at-will most commonly, but removals are rare; and sometimes, as in Ireland, the same lands remain in the occupation of the same families for generations. Their conical little hills, with their peasant villages a-top, are curiously ribbed with a particoloured vegetation, each

family cultivating their couple of acres after their own fashion; while the plain is not unfrequently abandoned to marshes, or ruins, or wild herbage. To dig drains, to clear out the substructions, to re-open the ancient water-courses, or to follow any improved system of cropping, is far beyond the enterprise of the poor farmer. He has neither skill, nor capital, nor savings. If nature takes the matter into her own hand, well; if not, one bad harvest irretrievably lands him in famine. Thus, with a soil and climate not excelled perhaps in the world, the husbandman drags out his life in poverty, and is often on the very brink of starvation. Whatever beauty and fertility that land still retains, it owes to nature, not to man. Indeed, it is now only the skeleton of Italy that exists, with here and there patches of its former covering,—nooks of exquisite beauty, which strike one the more from the desolation that surrounds them. But its cultivated portions are every year diminishing. Its woods and olives are fast disappearing; and by and by the very beasts of the field will be compelled to leave it, and the King of the Seven Hills, could we conceive of his remaining behind, will be left to reign in undisputed and unenvied supremacy over the storks and frogs, and other animals, that breed and swarm in its marshes.

[Pg 345]

The commerce of Italy, too, is extinct. How can it be otherwise? Under their terrible stagnation and death of mind, the Italians produce nothing for export. In that country there are no factories, no mining operations, no ship-building, no public works, no printing presses, no tools of trade. In short, they create nothing but a few articles of vertu; and even in those arts in which alone their genius is allowed to exert itself, foreigners excel them. The best sculptors and painters at Rome are Englishmen. And as regards their soil, which might send its wheat, and wine, and olives, all delicious naturally, to every part of the world, its harvests are now able but to feed the few men who live in the country. As to imports, both raw and manufactured, which the Romans need so much, we have seen how the sacerdotal Government takes effectual means to prevent these reaching the population. The Pontiff has enclosed his territory with a triple wall of protective duties and monopolies, to keep out the foreign merchant; and thus not only are the Romans forbidden to labour for themselves, but they are prevented profiting by the labour of others. There is a monopoly of sugar-refining, a monopoly of salt-making, and, in short, of every thing which the Romans most need. These monopolies are held by the favourites of the Government; and though generally the houses that hold them are either unwilling or unable to make more than a tithe of what the Romans would require, no other establishment can produce these articles, and they cannot be imported but at a ruinous duty.

[Pg 346]

We are reminded of another grievance under which the Romans groan. The few articles that are landed on their coast have to encounter tedious and almost insuperable delays before they can find their way to the capital. This is owing to the wretched state of the communication, which is kept purposely wretched in order to isolate Rome and the Romans from the rest of the world. That Church likes to sit apart and keep intact her venerable prestige, which would be apt to be contemned were it looked at close at hand. She dreads, too, to let her people come in contact with the population of other States. A few thousands of English aristocracy she can afford to admit annually within her territory. Their money she needs, and their indifference gives her no uneasiness. But to have the mass of a free people circulating through her capital would be a death-blow to her influence. She deems it, then, a wise policy, indeed a necessary safeguard, to make the access such as only money and time can overcome, though at the sacrifice of the trade and comforts of the people. Repeated attempts have been made to connect Rome with the rest of Europe; but hitherto, through the singularly adroit management of the Government, all such attempts have been fruitless.

In 1851 the long talked of concession for railways in the Roman States was obtained by Count Montalembert. The railways were to be constructed by foreign money and foreign agency, of course. A line from Rome to Ancona, and another from Rome to Civita Vecchia, were talked of, which would have put the Eternal City in immediate communication with the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. *Che belle cose!* the Italians might be heard uttering wherever grouped. It looked too well; an extravagant guarantee was offered to the Intraprendenti (contractors) by the Roman Government. The Parisian Count was to procure capitalists for the undertaking. The general opinion at the time was, that the Government was insincere in their extravagant guarantee; and they stipulated with the Count a condition as to time, calculated, as was supposed, to frustrate the undertaking. In this, however, the Government was outwitted; for capitalists were found within the prescribed time, engineers appointed, and contracts entered into. The iron-works of Terni and Tivoli amalgamated, in the hope of doing an extensive business by manufacturing the rails, &c.; and announced in their prospectus the intention of working the La Tolfa ironstone near Civita Vecchia. Many were induced to sink money in this amalgamated concern, and there it fruitlessly remains. The affray at Ferrara put the scutch upon the mighty railway scheme.

[Pg 347]

Were the Government in earnest on the subject of railways, sufficient capital might easily be raised to construct a line between Rome and Civita Vecchia, which would be of incalculable benefit to Rome. Vessels of heavy burden can discharge at the port of Civita Vecchia. Merchandise could thence be transmitted by rail to Rome, where its arrival could be calculated on to half an hour; and of what immense advantage would this be, contrasted with the present maritime conveyance, which keeps merchants in expectation of goods for days and weeks, and not unfrequently for a whole month, with bills of lading in hand from Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, and Sicily, by vessels carrying from fifty to a hundred and fifty tons! The entrance to the

[Pg 348]

mouth of the Tiber at Fuma-Cina is both difficult and dangerous; so much so, that sailing masters will not hazard the attempt if the weather is in the least degree stormy. They are obliged frequently to return to Civita Vecchia or Leghorn, until the weather will permit their entering the river at Fuma-Cina. There their vessels require to be lightened, or partly discharged into barges, there not being sufficient water in the Tiber to allow them to ascend to Rome; the average depth of water throughout the year being from four to five feet, which is only sufficient for the Pope's navy force, employed in tugging barges from Fuma-Cina to Rome. It is not the least important part of the Roman merchants' business to know that their long-expected goods have entered the river. This is ascertained at the custom-house at Ripa Grande, where the intelligence is chronicled every evening, on return of the navy force.

That navy consists of three small steamers, thirty horse power, and a dredging boat. Two of the steamers are kept for the traffic between Fuma-Cina and the custom-house at Rome. The other is employed on the upper part of the river, starting from the Ripetta in Rome for the Sabina country, going up about forty miles, and returning with wine, oil, Indian corn, and wood for fuel, green and charred. The dredging boat is scarcely ever used. The constantly filthy state of the river causes so much deposit, that the machine is unable to overcome it.

There are custom-houses, of course, on all the frontiers. A very respectable amount of bribery is done in these places: indeed, I never could see that much business of any other sort was transacted in them. I have already stated, that the first thing I was compelled to do on entering Rome was to give a bribe, in order to escape from the old temple of Antoninus, in which I unexpectedly found myself locked up. I met an intelligent Scotchman in Rome, who had newly returned from Naples, and who had to endure a half-day's detention at Terra Cina because he refused to pay the ransom of six scudi put upon his trunks, and insisted on their being searched. Corruption pervades all classes of functionaries. In Rome itself there are two custom-houses; one for merchandise imported by sea, and the other for overland goods. The hours for business are from nine o'clock till twelve o'clock. Declarations for relieving goods must be made betwixt nine and eleven, the other hour being appropriated to winding up the business of the preceding two hours. Almost everything which the country produces, whether for man or for beast, on entering the city has to pay duty at the gate. This is termed *Dazio di Consumo*. This department of the revenue is farmed out to an officer, whose servants are stationed at the gates for the purpose of uplifting the duty; and there, as in all the other Government custom-houses, much systematic cheating goes on. As an example, I may relate what happened to my friend Mr Stewart, whose acquaintance I had the good fortune to make in Rome, and whose information on all matters of trade in the Roman States, well known to him from long practical experience, was not only of the highest value, but was the means of affording me an insight into the workings of Romanism on the temporal condition of its subjects, such as few travellers have an opportunity of attaining. Mr Stewart was engaged to take charge of the one little iron-work in the city; and the transaction I am about to relate in his own words took place when he was entering the gates. "Along with my furniture," says he, "I had a trunk containing wearing-apparel and two *pocket-pistols*. The latter, I knew, were prohibited, and made the agent employed to pass the articles acquainted with the dilemma, which he heartily laughed at,—by way, I suppose, of having a bone to pick. 'Leave the matter to me,' said he, adding, 'the officials must be recompensed, you know.' That of course; and, to be reasonable, he inquired if I would give three dollars, for which sum he would guarantee their safety. I consented to this in preference to losing them, or being obliged to send them out of the country. Notwithstanding the agent's assurance, I felt naturally anxious at the barefaced transaction, which was coolly gone about. When the trunk should have been examined, the attention of the officials was voluntarily directed to some other article, while the agent's porters turned the trunk upside down, chalked it, and replied to the query, that it had been examined, and was not even opened, which the officials well knew, and for the consideration of three dollars they betrayed trust. The trunk might have contained jewellery, or even *screw-nails*,—both pay a high duty. The latter especially, being made at Tivoli, are prohibited, or admitted at the prohibitive duty of twenty-five baiocchi the Roman pound,—sufficient to illustrate what might have been the result of this transaction in a mercantile point of view, not to speak of the opportunity afforded for introducing the *Bible*. The officials are all indifferently remunerated, and thus do business for themselves at the cost of the Government. They are also very incapable for the discharge of their duty. For example, the *Governor* of the custom-house seriously asked me, preparatory to making a declaration for a *steam-boiler*, whether it was made of *wood* or of *iron*. The boiler was not before him; but the idea of a steam-boiler of wood from the lips of the Governor of a custom-house was astounding."

"Books of all kinds are taken to the land custom-house, where the *Revisore* is stationed for books alone. The *Revisore* speaks English tolerably well."

CHAPTER XXV.

INFLUENCE OF ROMANISM ON TRADE—(CONTINUED).

Why does the Church systematically discourage Trade?—Railways—Much needed—Church

opposes them—Could not a man take a journey of twenty or two hundred miles and be a good Catholic?—Motion is Liberty—Motion contributed to overthrow the Serfdom of the Middle Ages—Popes understand the connection between Motion and Liberty—Romans chained to the Soil—Gregory XVI. and the Iron-bridge—Gas in Rome—Spread of the Malaria—The Pontine Marshes—Neglect of Soil—Number of Paupers—How the Church prevents the Cultivation of the Campagna—Church Lands in England and Scotland—The price which Italy pays for the Papacy—Whether would the old Roman Woman or an old Scotch Woman make the better Ruler?

LET us pause here, and inquire into the cause of this most deplorable state of matters. Is not the Papal Government manifestly sacrificing its own interests? Would it not be better for itself were Italy covered with a prosperous agriculture and a flourishing trade? Were its cities filled with looms and forges, would not its people have more money to spend on masses and absolutions? and, instead of the Government subsisting on foreign loans, and being always on the eve of bankruptcy, it might fill its exchequer from the vast resources of the country, and have, moreover, the pleasure of seeing around it a prosperous and happy people.

This is all very true. None knows better the value of money than Rome; but she knows, too, the infinite hazard of acquiring it in the way of allowing trade and industry to enter the Papal States. Indeed, to do so would be to record sentence of banishment against herself. Every one must have remarked the difference betwixt the artizan of Birmingham and the peasant of Ireland. They seem to belong to two different races of men almost. The former is employed in making a certain piece of mechanism, or in superintending its working. He is compelled to calculate, to trace effects to their causes, and to study the relations of the various parts before him to the whole. In short, he is taught to think; and that thinking power he applies to all other subjects. His habits of life teach him to ask for reasons, and to accept of opinions only on evidence. The mind of the latter lies dead. Were Italy filled with a race of men like the first, the papacy could not live a day. Were trade, and machinery, and wealth to come in, the torpor of Italy would be broken up; and—terrible event to the papacy!—mind would awaken. What though the Pope reigns over a wasted land and a nation of beggars? he *does* reign; he counts for a European sovereign; and his system continues to exist as a power. As men in shipwreck throw overboard food, jewels, all, to save life, so Romanism has thrown all overboard to save itself. Nothing could be a stronger proof of this than the fact that, as the effects and benefits of trade become the more developed, the pontifical Government tightens its restrictions. The note of Antonelli, the present ruling spirit of the papacy, was the most prohibitive ever framed against the introduction of iron, in other words, of civilization. This is the price which Italy must pay for the Pope and his religion. She cannot participate in the advantages of foreign trade; she cannot enjoy the facilities and improvements of modern times; because, were she to enjoy these, she would lose the papacy. She must be content to remain in the barbarism of the middle ages, covered with that moral malaria which has smitten all things in that doomed land, and under the influence of which, the cities, the earth itself, and man, for whom it was made, are all sinking into one common ruin.^[3]

We have yet other illustrations of the pestiferous influence of Romanism on the temporal happiness of its subjects. We have already alluded to the determined manner in which the Pontifical Government has hitherto withstood the introduction of railways. And yet, if there be a country in Europe where railways are indispensable, it is the Papal States. The roads in the territory blessed by the Government of Christ's vicar, are more like canals than roads, with this difference, that there is too little water in them for floating a boat, and far too much for comfortable travelling. Besides, they are infested by brigands, whose pursuit a railway might enable you to distance. But a railway the subjects of the Pontifical Government cannot have. And why?

One would think that the mere mode of conveyance is a very harmless affair. What is it to the Pontifical Government whether the peasant of the Alban hills, or the citizen of Bologna, or the merchant of Ancona, visit Rome on foot, or in his waggon, or by rail? Is he not the same man? Will his ride convert him into a heretic, or shake his faith in Peter's successor? or will the laying down of a few miles of railroad weaken the foundations of that Church which boasts that she is founded on a rock, and that the gates of hell themselves shall not prevail against her? Or if it be said that it is not the mode of the journey, but the length of the journey, what difference can it make whether the man travel twenty miles or two hundred miles? The stability of the Church cannot be seriously endangered by a few miles less or more. Is the Pope's system of so peculiar a kind, that though it is possible for the man who walks twenty miles on foot to believe in it, it is wholly impossible for the man who rides two hundred miles by rail to do so? We know of no Roman doctor who has attempted to fix the precise number of miles which a good Catholic may travel from home without endangering his salvation. One would think that all this is plain enough; that there is no element of danger here; and yet the sharper instincts of the papacy have discovered that herein lies danger, and great danger, to its power. If the influence of Rome is to be preserved, it is not enough that the Bible be put out of existence, that the missionary be banished, and that the art of printing, and all means of diffusing ideas, be proscribed and exterminated: the very right of moving over the earth must be taken from man. Even *motion* must be placed under anathema.

We have a saying that *knowledge is power*. I would say that *motion is liberty*. The serfdom of

[Pg 353]

[Pg 354]

[Pg 355]

the middle ages was in good degree maintained by binding man to the soil. Astriction to the soil was at once the foundation and the symbol of that serfdom. The baron became the master of the body of the man; he became also the master of his mental ideas. But when the serf acquired the power of locomotion, he laid the foundation of his emancipation; and from that hour feudalism began to crumble. As the serfs' power of motion enlarged, their liberty enlarged. As formerly they had known slavery by its symbol *immovability*, so now they tasted freedom by its symbol *motion*. The serf travelled beyond the valley in which he was born; he saw new objects; he met his fellow-men; and learned to think. At last motion was perfected; the steam-engine hissed past him, and he felt that now he was completely unchained. I do not give this as a theory of the rise and progress of modern liberty; but unquestionably there is a close and intimate connection between motion and liberty.

[Pg 356]

The Popes are shrewd enough to see this connection; and herein lies their opposition to railroads. They have attempted, and still do attempt, to perpetuate papal serfdom, by tying their subjects to their paternal acres and their native town. Were my reader living in London or in Edinburgh, and wished to visit Chelsea or Portobello, how would he proceed? Go to the railway station and buy a ticket, and his journey is made. But were the country under the Pontifical Government, he would find it impossible to manage the matter quite so expeditiously. He must first present himself at the office of the prefect of police. He must state where he wishes to go to; what business he has there; how long he intends remaining. He must give his name, his age, his residence, and a certificate, if required, from his parish priest; and then, should the object of his journey be approved of, a description of his person will be taken down, a passport will be made out, for which he must pay some six or eight pauls; and after this process has been gone through, but not sooner, he may set out on his little journey. Very few of those who live in Rome were ever more than outside its walls. Even the nobles have the utmost difficulty in getting so far as Civita Vecchia; very few of them ever saw the sea. The Popes know that ideas as well as merchandise travel by rail; and that if the Romans are allowed to go from home, and to see new objects, new faces, and to hear new ideas, a process will be commenced which will ultimately, and at no distant day, undermine the papacy. But among men of ordinary intelligence there will be but one opinion regarding a system that sees an enemy not only in the Bible, but in the most necessary and useful arts,—in the steam-ship, in the railroad, in the electric telegraph; in short, in all the improvements and usages of civilized life. Such a system assuredly has perdition written upon its forehead.

[Pg 357]

The late Pope Gregory XVI. would not allow even an iron bridge to be thrown across the Tiber. The Romans solicited this, to get rid of a ferry-boat by which the Tiber is crossed at the point in question; but no; an iron bridge there could not be. And why? Ah, said Gregory, if we have an iron bridge in Rome, we shall next have an iron road; and if we have an iron road, "*adio*," the papacy will take its departure, and that by steam.

But the Pope had another reason for withholding his sanction from the iron bridge; and as that reason shows how some wretched crotchet, springing from their miserable system, is sure to start up on all occasions, and defeat the most needed improvement, I shall here state what it was. At the point where it was wished to have the bridge erected, the Tiber flows between two populous regions of the city. There is in consequence a considerable concourse, and the passengers are carried over, as I have said, in a ferry-boat, for which a couple of baiocchi is paid by each person to the ferryman. The money thus collected forms part of the revenues of a certain church in Rome, where the priests who receive it sing masses for the souls in purgatory. If you abolish the ferry-boat, it was argued, you will abolish the penny; and if you abolish the penny, what is to become of the poor souls in purgatory? and for the sake of the *souls*, the *living* were forced to do without the bridge.

[Pg 358]

I need scarcely say that there is no gas in Rome. And sure I am, if there be a dark spot in all the universe,—a place above all others needing light of all kinds, moral, mental, and physical,—it is this dark dungeon termed Rome. It has a few oil-lamps, swung on cords, at most respectable distances from one another; and you see their hazy, sickly, dying gleam far above you, making themselves visible, but nothing besides; and after sunset, Rome is plunged in darkness, affording ample opportunity for assassinations, robberies, and evil deeds of all kinds. I know not how many companies have been formed to light Rome with gas. An attempt was made to light in this way the Eternal City during the pontificate of Gregory XVI. A deputation went to the Vatican, and told the Pope that they would light his capital with gas. "Gas!" exclaimed Gregory, who had an owl-like dread of light of all kinds; "there shan't be gas in Rome while I am in Rome." Gregory is not in Rome now; Pio Nono is in the Vatican: but the same oil-lamps which lighted the Rome of Gregory XVI. still flourish in the Rome of Pio Nono.^[4]

All have heard of the Pontine Marshes,—a chain of swamps which run along the foot of the Volscian Mountains, and are the birthplace of the malaria,—a white vapour, which creeps snake-like over the country, and smites with deadly fever whoever is so foolhardy as to sleep on the Campagna during its continuance. These marshes, I understand, are increasing; and the malaria is increasing in consequence. That fatal vapour now comes every summer to the gates of Rome: it covers a certain quarter of the city, which, I was told, is uninhabitable during its continuance; and if nothing be done to lessen the malaria at its source, it will, some century or half century after this, envelope in its pestilential folds the whole of the Eternal City, and the traveller will

[Pg 359]

gaze with awe on the blackened ruins of Rome, as he does on those of Babylon on the plain of Chaldea: so, I say, will he see the heaps of Rome on the wasted bosom of the Campagna deserted by man, and become the dwelling-place of the dragons and satyrs of the wilderness. But matters are not come to this yet. An English company (for every attempted improvement in Rome has originated with English skill and capital) was formed some years ago, to drain the Pontine Marshes. They went to the Vatican; and Sir Humphrey Davy being then in Rome, they induced him to accompany them, in the hope that his high scientific authority would have some weight with the Pontiff. They stated their object, which was to drain the Pontine Marshes. They assured the Pontiff it was practicable to a very large extent; and they pointed out its manifold advantages, as regarded the health of the country, and other things. "Drain the Pontine Marshes!" exclaimed Pope Gregory, in a tone of surprise and horror at this new project of these everlastingly scheming English heretics,— "Drain the Pontine Marshes! God made the Pontine Marshes; and if He had intended them to be drained, He would have drained them himself."

The barrenness that afflicts all countries which are the seat of a false religion is a public testimony of the Divine indignation against idolatry. For the sin of man the earth was originally cursed: and wherever wicked systems exist, there a manifest curse rests upon the earth. The Mohammedan apostacy and the Roman apostacy are now seated in the midst of wildernesses. And, to make the fact more striking, these lands, which are deserts now, were anciently the best cultivated on the globe. There stood the proudest of earth's cities,—there the arts flourished,—and there men were free after the measure of ancient freedom. All this is at an end long since. Ruins, silence, and a sickly and sinking population, are the mournful spectacles which greet the eye of the traveller in Papal and Mohammedan countries. Thus God bears outward testimony against the Papal and Mohammedan systems. He has cursed the ground for their sakes; not in the way of miracle,—not by sending an angel to smite it, or by raining brimstone upon it, as he did on Sodom: the angel that has smitten the dominions of the Pope and of the False Prophet,—the brimstone and fire which have been rained upon them,—are the wicked systems which have there grown up, and by which Government has been rendered blind, infatuated, and tyrannical, and man stupid, indolent, and vicious. But the laws the Almighty has established, according to which idolatry necessarily and uniformly blights the earth and the men who live upon it, only show that his indignation against these evil systems is unchangeable and eternal, and will pursue them till they perish. Of this the state of the plain around Rome, the *Agro Romano*, forms a terrible example.

I have endeavoured in former chapters to exhibit a picture of the frightful desolation of this once magnificent plain. He that set his mark on the brow of the first murderer has set his mark on this plain, where so much blood has been shed. "Now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength." But God has cursed this plain through the instrumentality of this evil system the Papacy, and I shall show you how.

I have already shown that there is not, and cannot be, anything like trade in Rome, beyond what is necessary to repair the consumpt of articles in daily use. In the absence of trade there is a proportionate amount of idleness; and that idleness, in its turn, breeds beggary, vagabondism, and crime. The French Prefect, Mr Whiteside tells us, published a statistical account of Rome; and how many paupers does he say there are in it? Why, not fewer than thirty thousand. Thirty thousand paupers in one city, and that city, in its usual state, of but about a hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants! Subtract the priests, the English residents, and the French soldiers, and every third man is a beggar. I was fortunate enough one evening to meet, in a certain shop in Rome, an intelligent Roman, willing to talk with me on the state of the country. The shopkeeper, as soon as he found the turn the conversation had taken, discreetly stepped out, and left it all to ourselves. "I never in all my life," I remarked, "saw a city in which I found so many beggars. The people seem to have nothing to do, and nothing to eat. There are here some hundred thousand of you cooped up within these old walls, and one half the population do nothing all day long but whine at the heels of English travellers, or hang on at the doors of the convents, waiting their one meal a-day. Why is this? Outside the walls is a magnificent plain, which, were it cultivated, would feed ten Romes, instead of one. Why don't you take picks, or spades, or ploughs,—anything you can lay hands on,—and go out to that plain, and dig it, and plant it, and sow it, and reap it, and eat and drink, and be merry?" "Ah! so we would," said he. "Then, why don't you?" "We dare not," he replied. "Dare not! Dare not till the earth God has given you?" "It is the Church's," he said. "But come now," said he, "and I will explain how it comes to be so." He went on to say, that one portion of the Campagna was gifted to the convents in Rome, another portion was gifted to the nunneries, another to the hospitals, and another to the pontifical families,—that is, to the sons and daughters, or, as they more politely speak in Rome, the nephews and nieces, of the Popes. These were the owners of the great Roman plain; and in their hands almost every acre of it was locked up, inaccessible to the plough, and inaccessible to the people. Even in our country it is found that corporations make the worst possible landlords, and that lands in the possession of such bodies are always less productive than estates managed in the ordinary way. But what sort of farming are we to expect from such corporations as we find in the city of Rome? What skill or capital have a brotherhood of lazy monks, to enable them to cultivate their lands? What enterprise or interest have a sisterhood of nuns to farm their property? They know they shall have their lifetime of it, and that is all they care for. Accordingly, they let their lands for grazing,

on payment of a mere trifle of annual rent; and so the Campagna lies unploughed and unsown. A tract of land extending from Civita Vecchia to well nigh the gates of Rome,—which would make a Scotch dukedom or a German principality,—belonging to the *San Spirito*, does little more, I was told, than pay its working. The land labours under an eternal entail, which binds it over to perpetual sterility. It is God's, *i.e.* it is the Church's; and no one,—no, not even the Pope,—dare alienate a single acre of it. No Pope would set his face to such a piece of reformation, well knowing that every brotherhood and sisterhood in Rome would rise in arms against him. And even though he should screw his courage to such an encounter, he is met by the canon law. The Pope who shall dare to secularize a foot-breadth of land which has been gifted to the Church is by that law accursed. Here, then, is the price which the Romans pay for the Papacy. Outside the walls of the city lie the estates of the Church, depastured at certain seasons by a few herds, tended by men clad in skins, and looking as savage as the animals they tend; while inside the walls are some hundred thousand Romans, enduring from one year's end to another all the miseries of a partial famine. Nor is there the least hope that matters will mend so long as the Papacy lasts. For while the Papacy is in Italy, the Campagna, once so populous and rich, will be what it now is,—a desert.

[Pg 363]

And the Papal States, lapsed into more than primeval sterility, overrun by brigandage and beggary, are the picture of what Britain would be under the Papacy. Let the Roman Church get the upper hand in this country, and, be assured, the first thing it will do will be to demand back every acre of land that once belonged to it. Before the Reformation, half the lands of England, and a third of the lands of Scotland, were in the possession of the Church. She keeps a chart of them to this hour: she knows every foot-breadth of British soil that at any time belonged to her: she holds its present possessors to be robbers and sacrilegious men; and the first moment she has the power, she will compel them to disgorge what she holds to be ill-gotten wealth, and endow her with the broad acres she once possessed. Nor will she stop here. By haunting death-beds,—by putting in motion the machinery of the confessional,—by the threat of purgatory in this case, and the lure of paradise in that,—she will speedily add to her former ample domain. And what will our country then become? We shall have Mother Church for landlord; and while she feasts daily at her sumptuous board, we shall have what the Romans now have,—the crumbs. We shall have monks and nuns for our farmers; and under their management, farewell to the smiling fields, the golden harvests, and the opulent cities, of Scotland and England. Our country will again become what it was before the Reformation,—a land of moors, and swamps, and forests, with a few patches of indifferent cultivation around our convents and abbeys. Vagabondism, lay and sacerdotal, will flourish once more in Britain; trade and commerce will be put down, as savouring of independence and intelligence; indolence and beggary will be sanctified; and troops of friars, with wallets on their backs, impudence on their brows, and profanity and filthiness on their tongues, will scour the country, demanding that every threshold and every purse shall be open to them. This result will come as surely as to-morrow will come, provided we permit the Papacy to raise its head once more among us.

[Pg 364]

Let no one imagine that this terrible wreck of man, and of all his interests,—of civilization, of industry, of trade and commerce,—has happened of chance, and that there is no connection between this deplorable state of matters and the system which has prevailed in Italy. On the contrary, it is the direct, the necessary, and the uniform result of that system. The barbarian hates art because he does not understand its uses, and dreads its power. But the hatred the Pope bears to the useful arts is not that of the barbarian. It is the intelligent, the consistent hatred of a man who knows what he is about. It is the hatred of a man who comprehends both the character of his own system, and the tendency of modern improvements, and who sees right well, that if these improvements are introduced, the Papacy must fall. Self-preservation is the first law of systems, as of individuals; and the Papacy, feeling the antagonism between itself and these things, ever has and ever will resist them. It cannot tolerate them though it would. Speculatists and sentimentalists may talk as they please; but the destruction of that system is the first requisite to the regeneration of Italy.

[Pg 365]

Such, then, is the condition of Italy at this day. Were we to find a state of things like this in the centre of Africa, or in some barbarous region thousands and thousands of miles away from European literature, arts, and influences, where the plough and the loom had yet to be invented, it would by no means surprise us. But to find a state of matters like this in the centre of Europe,—in Italy, once the head of civilization and influence, the birthplace of modern art and letters,—is certainly wonderful. But the wonder is completed when we reflect that this state of things obtains under a Government claiming to be guided by a higher than mortal sagacity,—a Government which says that it never did, and never can, err,—a Government that is supernatural and infallible. Supernatural and infallible! Why, I say, go out into the street,—stop the first old woman you meet,—carry her to Rome,—put a three-storied cap on her head,—enthroned her on the high altar in St Peter's,—burn incense before her, and call her infallible,—I say that old woman will be a more enlightened ruler than Pio Nono. The old Scotch woman or English woman would beat the old Roman woman hollow.

The facts I have stated are sad enough; but the more harrowing picture of the working of the papal system has yet to be shown.

JUSTICE AND LIBERTY IN THE PAPAL STATES.

Justice the Pillar of the State—Claim implied in being God's Vicar, namely, that the Pope governs the World as God would govern it, were He personally present in it—No Civil Code in the Papal States—Citizens have no Rights save as Church Members—No Lay Judges—The Pontifical Government simply the Embodiment of the Papacy—Courts of Justice visited—Papal Tribunals—The Rota—Signatura—Cassation—Exceptional Tribunals—Apostolical Chamber—House of Peter—Justice bought and sold at Rome—POLITICAL JUSTICE—Gregorian Code—Case of Pietro Leoni—Accession of Pius IX.—His Popularity at first—Re-action—Case of Colonel Calendrelli—The Three Citizens of Macarata—The Hundred Young Men of Faenza—Butchery at Sinigaglia—Horrible Executions at Ancona—Estimated Number of Political Prisoners 30,000—Pope's Prisons described—Horrible Treatment of Prisoners—The Sbirri—The Spies—Domiciliary Restraint—Expulsions from Rome—Imprisonment without reason assigned—Manner in which Apprehensions are made—Condemnations without Evidence or Trial—Misery of Rome—The Pope's Jubilee.

WE turn now to the JUSTICE of the Papal States. Alas! if in the preceding chapters on *Trade* we were discoursing on what does not exist, we are now emphatically to speak of what is but a shadow, a mockery. To say that in the Papal States Justice is not,—that it is a negation,—is only to state half the truth. Were that all, thankful indeed would the Romans be. But, alas! in the seat of Justice there sits a stern, irresponsible, lawless power, before which virtue is confounded and dumb, and wickedness only can stand erect.

[Pg 367]

On the importance of justice to the welfare of society I need not enlarge. It is the main pillar of the State. But where are you to look for justice,—justice in its unmixed, eternal purity,—if not at Rome? Rome is the seat of the Vicar of God. Ponder, I pray you, all that this title imports. The Vicar of God is just God on earth; and the government of God's Vicar is just the government of God. It is the possession and exercise of the same authority, the same attributes, the same moral infallibility, and the same moral omnipotence, in the government of mankind, which God possesses and exercises in the government of the universe. The government of the Pope is a model set up on the earth, before kings and nations, of God's righteous and holy government in the heavens. As I, the Vicar of Christ, govern men, so would Christ himself, were he here in the Vatican, govern them. If the claim advanced by the Pope, when he takes to himself the title of God's Vicar, amounts to anything, it amounts to this,—to all this, and nothing less than this.

The case being so, where, I ask, are you entitled to look for justice, if not at Rome? This is her throne: here she sits, or should, according to the theory of the popedom, high above the disturbing and blinding passions of earth, serenely calm and inexorably true, weighing all actions in her awful scales, and giving forth those solemn awards which find their response in the universal reason and conscience of mankind. If so, what mean these dungeons? Why these trials shrouded in secrecy? Why this clanking of chains, and that cry which has gone up to heaven, and which pleads for justice there? Come near, I pray you, and look at the Pope's justice; enter his tribunals, and see the working of his courts; listen to the evidence which is there received, and the sentences which are there pronounced; visit his dungeons and galleys; and then tell me what you think of the administration of this man who styles himself God's Vicar.

[Pg 368]

Let me first of all give prominence to the fact that in the Papal States there is no *civil* code. It is a purely *spiritually* governed region. The Church sustains herself as judge in *all* causes, and holds her law as sufficiently comprehensive in its principles, and sufficiently flexible and practical in its special provisions, to determine all questions that can arise, of whatever nature,—whether relating to the body or the soul of man, to his property or his conscience. By what is strictly and purely church law are all things here adjudicated, for other law there is none. That law is the decretals and bulls of the popes. Only think of such a code! The Roman jurisprudence amounts to many hundreds of volumes, and its precedents range over many centuries, so that the most plodding lawyer and the most industrious judge may well despair of ever being able to tell exactly what the law says on any particular case, or of being able to find a clue to the true interpretation, granting that he sincerely wishes to do so, through the inextricable labyrinth of decisions by which he is to be guided. This law was made by the Church and for the Church, and gives to the citizen, as such, no right or privilege of any kind. Whatever rights the Roman possesses, he possesses solely in his character of Church member; he has a right to absolution when he confesses; a right to the undisturbed possession of his goods when he takes the sacrament; but he has no rights in his character of citizen; and when he falls out of communion with the Church, he falls at the same time from all rights whatever. He is beyond the pale of the Church, and beyond the pale of the law. Our freethinkers, who are so ready to fraternise with the Romanists, would do well to consider how they would like this sort of regimen.

[Pg 369]

Let me, in the second place, give prominence to the fact, that in the Papal States there are no lay judges. There all are "anointed prelates." This applies to all the tribunals, from the highest to the lowest. In short, the whole machinery of the Government is priestly. Its head is a priest,—the Pope; its Prime Minister is a priest; its Chancellor of the Exchequer is a priest; its Secretary at War is a priest; all are priests. These functionaries cannot be impeached. However gross their

blunders, or glaring their malversations, they are secure from censure; because to punish them would be to say that they had erred, and to say that they had erred would be to impeach the infallibility of the Pontifical Government. A treasurer who enriches himself and robs the exchequer may be promoted to the cardinalate, but cannot be censured. The highest mark of displeasure on which the popes have ventured in such cases has been, to appoint to a dignity with a very inadequate salary. The Government of the Papal States, both in its *law* and in its *administration*, being strictly sacerdotal, the great fairness of the test we are now applying to the Papacy is undeniable. It would be very unfair to try the religion of Britain by the government of Britain, or to charge on Christianity the errors, the injustice, and the oppression which our rulers may commit, because our religion is one thing, and our Government is another. But it is not so in the Papal States. There the Church is the Government. The papal Government is simply the embodiment of the papal religion. And I cannot conceive a fairer, a more accurate, or a more comprehensive test of the genius and tendency of a religion, than simply the condition of that country where the making of the law, the administration of the law, the control of all persons, the regulation of all affairs, and the adjudication of all questions, are done by that religion; and where, with no one impediment to obstruct it, and with every conceivable advantage to aid it, it can exhibit all its principles and accomplish all its objects. If that religion be true, the condition of such country ought to be the most blessed on the face of the earth.

[Pg 370]

One day I visited the courts of justice, which are on Mount Citorio. We ascended a spacious staircase (I say we, for Mr Stewart, the intelligent and obliging companion of my wanderings in Rome, was with me), and entered a hall crowded with a number of shabby-looking people. We turned off into a side-room, not larger than one's library, where the court was sitting. Behind a table slightly raised, and covered with green cloth, sat two priests as judges. A counsel sat with them, to assist occasionally. On the wall at their back hung a painting of Pont. Max. Pius IX.; and on the table stood a crucifix. The judges wore the round cap of the Jesuits. I saw men in coarse bombazene gowns, which I took for macers: these, I soon discovered, were the advocates. They were clownish-looking men, with great lumpish hands, and an unmistakeably cowed look. They addressed the court in short occasional speeches in Latin; for it is one of the privileges of the Roman people to have their suits argued in a tongue they don't understand. There were some half-dozen people lounging in the place. There was an air of unconcern and meanness on the court, and all its practitioners and attendants; but, being infallible, it can dispense with the appearance of dignity. I asked Mr Stewart to conduct me to the criminal court, which was sitting in another apartment under the same roof. He showed me the door within which the assize is held, but told me at the same time, that neither myself nor any one in Rome could cross that threshold,—the judge, the prisoner, his advocate, the public prosecutor, and the guard, being the only exceptions. Let me now describe the machinery by which justice, as it is called, is administered.

[Pg 371]

The judges, I have said, are prelates; and as in Rome the administration of justice is a low occupation compared with the Church, priests which are incapable, or which have sinned against their order, are placed on the tribunals. A prelate who has a knowledge of jurisprudence is a phenomenon; hence the judges do not themselves examine the merits of causes, but cause them to be investigated by a private auditor, whom they select from the practising counsel. According to the report of this individual, the members of the tribunal pronounce their judgment, no matter what objections may be pled, or arguments offered, to the contrary. This system gives rise, as may well be conceived, to innumerable acts of partiality and injustice.

There is a tribunal of appeal for the Romagnias, another for the Marshes, and a third for the Capitol. Besides these, there are tribunals of the third class throughout the States. The tribunal of appeal for the Capitol is the ROMAN ROTA. Before this court our own Henry, and the other kings of Europe, carried their causes, in those days when the Pope was really a grand authority, and ruled Christendom. Having now little business as regards monarchs and the international quarrels of kingdoms, it has been converted into a tribunal for private suits. It still shrouds itself in its mediæval secrecy, which, if it robs its decisions of public confidence, at least screens the ignorance of its judges from public contempt. There are, besides, the tribunals of the *Signatura* and of *Cassation*, in which partiality examines, incompetence pronounces judgment, delays exhaust the patience and the money of the suitors, and the decent veil of a dead language wraps up the illegality.

[Pg 372]

Besides these, there are the *exceptional* tribunals, which are very numerous. Among them the chief is the *ecclesiastical* jurisdiction, so extensive, that it is sufficient that some very trifling interest of a priest, or of some charity fund, or even of a Jew or a recent convert, is concerned, to transfer the cause to the bar of the privileged tribunal. The jurisdiction of the exceptional tribunal is exercised in the provinces by the vicar-general of the bishop; and in Rome the suits are laid before the private auditors of the cardinal-vicar, and of the bishop *in partibus*, his assistant. The auditors pronounce judgment in the name of the cardinal or the bishop, who signs it without any examination on his part. The suits which concern the public finances are decided by the exceptional tribunal, and a tribunal called the "*Plena Camera*" (full chamber); and any private person who might chance to gain his cause is condemned, as an invariable maxim, to pay the costs. Exceptional tribunals are to be found in very many parochial places, especially in those parishes near Rome where the judges are named by, and are removable at the will of, the baron.

It can easily be imagined what sort of a chance any one may have who should have a suit with the baron. Besides all these, we must not omit the *Reverend Apostolical Chamber*, always on the brink of bankruptcy, which has been in the habit of exacting contributions, that they may sell to speculators the revenues of succeeding years. Thus private families, invested with iniquitous privileges, extort money from the unfortunate labourers, by royal authority and the help of the bailiff.

There is another tribunal which should be styled *monstrous*, rather than by the milder term of exceptional; this is the "*Fabbrica di S. Pietro*" (house of St Peter.) To this was granted, by the caprice of the Pope, the right to claim from the immediate or distant heirs of any testator, *even at remote epochs*, the sum of unpaid legacies for pious purposes. The Cardinal Arch-Priest and the Commons, who represent the pretended creditor, are judges between themselves and the presumed debtor. They search the archives; they open and they close testamentary documents not ever published; they arbitrarily burden the estates of the citizens with mortgages or charges; and they commence their proceedings where other tribunals leave off,—that is, by an execution and seizure, under the pretence of securing the credits not yet determined upon. To the commissaries of this strange tribunal in the provinces is awarded the fifth of the sum claimed. Whosoever desires to settle the question by a compromise is not permitted to attempt it, unless he shall first have satisfied this fifth, and paid the expenses, besides the fees of the fiscal advocate. If any one should have the rare luck to gain his suit, as, for instance, by producing the receipt in full, he must nevertheless pay a sum for the judgment absolving him.

[Pg 373]

The presidents of the tribunals—the minor judges, comprising the private auditors of the Vicar of Rome—have the power of legitimatizing all contracts for persons affected by legal incapacity. This is generally done without examination, and merely in consideration of the fee which they receive. It would take a long chapter to narrate the sums which have been, by a single stroke of the pen, wrongfully taken from poor widows and orphans. Incapacity for the management of one's affairs is sometimes pronounced by the tribunal, but very frequently is decreed by the prelate-auditor of the Pope, without any judicial formality. Thus any citizen may at any moment find himself deprived of the direction of his private affairs and business.

[Pg 374]

Such is the machinery employed for dispensing justice by a man who professes to be the infallible fountain of equity, and the world's teacher as regards the eternal maxims of justice. Justice! The word is a delusion,—a lie. It is a term which designates a tyranny worse than any under which the populations of Asia groan.^[5]

It would be wearisome to adduce individual cases, even were I able to do so. But, indeed, the vast corruption of the *civil justice* of the Papal States must be evident from what I have said. A law so inextricable!—judges so incompetent, who decide without examining!—tribunals which sit in darkness! Why, justice is not dispensed in Rome; it is bought and sold; it is simply a piece of merchandise; and if you wish to obtain it, you cannot, but by going to the market, where it is openly put up for sale, and buying it with your money. Mr Whiteside, a most competent witness in this case, who spent two winters in Rome, and made it his special business to investigate the Roman jurisprudence, both in its theory and in its practice, tells us in effect, in his able work on Italy, that if you are so unfortunate as to have a suit in the Roman courts, the decision will have little or no reference to the merits of the cause, but will depend on whether you or your opponent is willing to approach the judgment-seat with the largest bribe. Such, in substance, is Mr Whiteside's testimony; and precisely similar was the evidence of every one whom I met in Rome who had had any dealings with the papal tribunals.

[Pg 375]

But I turn to the political justice of the Papal States,—a department even more important in the present state of Italy, and where the specific acts are better known. Let us look first at the tribunal set up in Rome for the trial of all crimes against the State. And let the reader bear in mind, that offences against the Church are crimes against the State, for there the Church is the State. A secret, summary, and atrocious tribunal it is, differing in no essential particular from that sanguinary tribunal in Paris where Robespierre passed sentence, and the guillotine executed it. The Gregorian Code^[6] enacts, that in cases of sedition or treason, the trial may take place by a commission nominated by the Pope's Secretary; that the trial shall be secret; that the prisoner shall not be confronted with the witnesses, or know their names; that he may be examined in prison and by torture. The accused, according to this barbarous code, has no means of proving his innocence, or defending his life, beyond the hasty observations on the evidence which his advocate, who is appointed in all cases by the tribunal, may be able to make on the spur of the moment. This tribunal is simply the Inquisition; and yet it is by this tribunal that the Pope, who professes to be the first minister of justice on earth, governs his kingdom. No man is safe at Rome. However innocent, his liberty and life hang by a single thread, which the Government, by the help of such a tribunal as this, may snap at any moment.

[Pg 376]

This is the established, the legal course of papal justice. Let the reader lift his eyes, and survey, if he have courage, the wide weltering mass of misery and despair which the Papal States present. We cannot bring all into view; we must permit a few only to speak for the rest. Here they come from a region of doom, to tell to the free people of Britain, if they will hear them, the dread secrets of their prison-house; and, we may add, to warn them, "lest they also come into this place of torment." I shall first of all take a case that occurred before the Revolution, lest any one should

affirm of the cases that are to follow, that the Pontifical Government had been exasperated by the insurrection, and hurried into measures of more than usual severity. This case I give on the authority of Mr Whiteside, who, being curious to see a *political process* in the Roman law, after some trouble procured the following, which, having been compiled under the orders of Pius IX., may be relied on as strictly accurate. Pietro Leoni had acted as official attorney to the poor. Well, in 1831, under the pontificate of Gregory XVI., he was arrested on a charge of being a member of a political club. He was brought to trial, acquitted, set free, but deprived of his office, though why I cannot say, unless it was for the crime of being innocent. To sustain an aged father, a wife and children, Pietro had to work harder than ever. In 1836 he was again arrested,—suddenly, without being told for what,—hurried to the Castle of St Angelo, in the dungeons of which he had to undergo a rigorous examination, from which nothing could be elicited. He was not released, however, but kept there, till witnesses could be found or hired. At length a certain vine-dresser came forward to accuse Leoni. One day, said the vine-dresser, Pietro Leoni, whom he had never seen till then, came to his door, and, after a short conversation with him, in the presence of his sons, handed him a manuscript relating to a *reform society*, of which, he said, he had been a member for years. The vine-dresser buried this document at the bottom of a tree in his garden. The spot was searched, but nothing was found; his strange story was contradicted by his wife and sons; and the Pontifical Government could not for very shame condemn him on such evidence; but neither did they let him go. A full year passed over him in the dungeons of St Angelo. At last three additional witnesses—(their names never were known)—were produced against him. And what did they depose? Why, that they had heard some one say that he had heard Pietro Leoni say, that he (Leoni) was a member of a secret society; and on this hearsay evidence did the Pontifical Government condemn the poor attorney to a life-long slavery in the galleys. We find him ten long years thereafter still in the dungeons of the Castle of St Angelo, and writing the Pope in a strain which one would think might have moved a heart of stone. The petition is printed in the process. It begins,—

[Pg 377]

"Most holy father, divest yourself of the splendours of royalty, and, dressed in the garb of a private citizen, cause yourself to be conducted into these subterranean prisons, where there is buried, not an enemy of his country, not a violator of the laws, but an innocent citizen, whom a secret enemy has calumniated, and who has had the courage to sustain his innocence in presence of a judge prejudiced or corrupted.... Command this living tomb to be opened, and ask an unhappy man the cause of his misfortunes."

[Pg 378]

And concludes thus,—

"But, holy father, neither the prolonged imprisonment of ten years, nor separation from my family, nor the total ruin of my earthly prospects, should ever reduce me to the baseness of admitting a crime which I did not commit. And I call God to witness that I am innocent of the accusation brought against me; and that the true cause of my unjust condemnation was, and is, a private pique and personal enmity.... Listen, therefore, to justice,—to the humble entreaties of an aged father,—a desolate wife,—unhappy children,—who exist in misery, and who with tears of anguish implore your mercy."

Did the heart of Gregory relent? Did he hasten to the prison, and beg his prisoner to come forth? Ah, no: the petition was received, flung aside, and forgotten; and Pietro Leoni continued to lie in the dungeons of St Angelo till death came to the Vatican, and Gregory went to his account, and the prison-doors of St Angelo were opened, as a matter of course, not of right, on the accession of a new Pope. No wonder that Lambruschini and Marini, the chief actors in the atrocities committed under Gregory, resisted that amnesty by which Pietro Leoni, and hundreds more, were raised from the grave, as it were, to proclaim their villainies. I give this case because it occurred before the Revolution, and is a fair sample, as a Roman advocate assured Mr Whiteside, of the calm, every-day working of the Pontifical Government under Gregory XVI. I come now to relate other cases, if possible more affecting, which came under my own cognizance, more or less, while in Rome.

But let me first glance at the rejoicings that filled Rome on the accession of Pius IX. A bright but perfidious gleam heralded the night, which has since settled down so darkly on the Papal States. The scene I describe in the words of Mr Stewart, who was an eye-witness of it:—"I was at Rome when Pope Pius IX. made his formal triumphal entrance into the city by the Porta del Popolo, where was a magnificent arch entering to the Corso. The arch was erected specially for the occasion, and executed with much artistic skill. Banners were waving in profusion along the Corso, bearing, some of them, very far-fetched epithets; while every balcony and window was studded with gay and admiring citizens, all alike eager in demonstrating their attachment to the Holy Father. Nothing, in fact, could exceed the gaiety of the scene: all and sundry seemed bent on the one idea of displaying their loyalty. What with garlands of flowers, white handkerchiefs, and vivas, the feelings were worked up to such a pitch, that the *young nobles*, when the state carriage arrived at the Piazza Colonna, actually unyoked the horses, and scampered off with carriage and Pope, to the Quirinal Palace, nearly a mile. This ebullition of feeling was undoubtedly the result of the general amnesty, and the bright expectations then cherished of a new era for Italy." Such an ebullition may appear absurd, and even childish, to us, who have been so long accustomed to liberty; but we must bear in mind that the Romans had groaned in fetters for centuries, and these, as they believed, had now been struck off for ever. "Was there," asked Mr Whiteside of a sculptor in Rome, "really affecting yourself, any practical oppression under old

[Pg 379]

Gregory?" The artist started. "No man," said he, "could count on one hour's security or happiness: I knew not but there might be a spy behind that block of marble: the pleasure of life was spoiled. I had three friends, who, supping in a garden near this spot, were suddenly arrested, flung into prison, and lay there, though innocent, till released by Pio Nono." As regards the amnesty of Pio Nono, which so intoxicated the Romans, it is common for popes to make political capital of the errors and crimes of their predecessors; and as regards his reforming policy, which deluded others besides the Italians, it was a very transparent dodge to restore the papacy to its old supremacy. The Cobra di Capella relaxed its folds on Italy for a moment, to coil itself more firmly round the rest of the world. Of this none are now better aware than the Romans.

[Pg 380]

The re-action,—the flight,—the Republic,—the bombardment,—the return to the Vatican on a path deluged with his subjects' blood,—all I pass over. But how shall I describe or group the horrors that have darkened and desolated the Papal States from that hour to this? What has their history been since, but one terrible tale of apprehensions, proscriptions, banishments, imprisonments, and executions, the full recital of which would make the ear of him that hears it to tingle? Nero and Caligula were monsters of crime; but their capricious tyranny, while it fell heavily on individuals, left the great body of the empire comparatively untouched. But the tyranny of the Pope penetrates every home, and crushes every person and thing. There was not under Nero a tenth part of the misery in Rome which there is now. Were the acts of Nero and of Pio to be fully written, I have not a doubt,—I am certain,—that the government of the imperial despot would be seen to be liberty itself, compared with the measureless, remorseless, inappeasable, wide-wasting tyranny of the sacerdotal one. The diadem was light indeed, compared with the tiara. The little finger of the Popes is thicker than the loins of the Cæsars. The sights I saw, and the facts I heard, actually poisoned my enjoyment of Rome. What pleasure could I take in statues and monuments, when I saw the wretched beings that lived beside them, and marked the faces on which despair was painted, the forms that grief had bowed to the very dust, the dead men who wandered in the streets and about the old ruins, as if they sought, but could not find, their graves? Ah! there *is* not, there never *was*, on earth a tyranny like the Papacy. But let me come to particulars.

[Pg 381]

I shall first narrate the story of Colonel Calendrelli. It was told me by our own consul in Rome, Mr Freeborn, who knew intimately the colonel, and deeply interested himself in his case. Colonel Calendrelli was treasurer at war during the Republic. The Republic came to an end; the Pontifical Government returned; and Colonel Calendrelli, being unable to get away along with the other agents and friends of the Republic, was, of course, apprehended by the restored Government. It was necessary to find some pretext on which to condemn the colonel; and what, does the reader think, was the charge preferred against Colonel Calendrelli? Why, it was this, that the colonel had embezzled the public funds to the amount of twenty scudi. Twenty scudi! How much is that? Only five pounds sterling! That Colonel Calendrelli, a gentleman, a scholar, a man on whose honesty a breath had never been blown, should risk character and liberty for five pounds sterling! Why, the Pontifical Government should have made it five hundred or five thousand pounds, if they wished to have the accusation believed. Well, then, on the charge of defrauding the public treasury to the extent of twenty Roman scudi was Colonel Calendrelli brought to trial, and condemned! Condemned to what? To the galleys. Nor does that bring fully out the iniquity of the sentence. Our consul in Rome assured me that he had investigated the case, from his friendship for the colonel, and that the matter stood thus:—The colonel had engaged a man to do a piece of work, for which he was to receive five pounds as wages. The work was done, the wages were paid, the man's receipt was tendered, and the witnesses in whose presence the money had been paid bore their testimony to the fact. All these proofs were before Mr Freeborn. Nay, more; the papal tribunal that tried the case was told that all these witnesses and documents were ready to be produced. And yet, in the teeth of this evidence, completely establishing the innocence of Colonel Calendrelli, which, indeed, no one doubted, was the colonel condemned to the galleys; and when I was in Rome, he was working as a galley-slave on the high-road near Civita Vecchia, chained to another galley-slave. This is a sample of the pontifical justice. Take another case.

[Pg 382]

The tragedy I am now to relate was consummated during my stay in the Eternal City. In the town of Macerata, to the east of Rome, it happened one day that a priest was fired at as he was passing along the street at dusk. He was not shot, happily;—the ball, missing the priest, sank deep in a door on the other side of the way. This happened under the Republic; and the police either could not or would not discover the perpetrator of the deed. The thing was the talk of the town for a day or so, and was then forgotten for ever, as every one thought. But no. The Republic came to an end; back came the pontifical police to Macerata; and then the affair of the priest was brought up. The prefect had not been installed in his office many days till a person presented himself before him, and said, "I am the man who shot at the priest." "You!" exclaimed the prefect. "Yes; and I was hired to shoot him by——," naming three young men of the town, who had been the most active supporters of the Republic. These were precisely the three young men, of all others in Macerata, whom it was most for the interest of the Papacy to get rid of. That very day these three young men were apprehended. They were at last brought to trial; and will it be believed, that on the solitary and uncorroborated testimony of a man who, according to his own confession, was a hired assassin,—and surely I do the man no injustice if I suppose that, if he was willing for money to commit murder, he might be willing for money, or some priestly consideration, to commit perjury,—on the single and unsupported evidence, I say, of this man, a

[Pg 383]

hired assassin according to his own confession, were these three young men condemned? And to what? To death!—and while I was in Rome they were actually guillotined! I saw their sentence placarded on the Piazza Colonna on the morning after my arrival in Rome. This writing of doom was the first thing I read in that city. It bore the names of the accused, the alleged crime, and an abstract of the evidence, or, I should say, volunteered statement, of the would-be assassin. It had the terrible guillotine at the top, and the fisherman's ring at the bottom; and though I had known nothing more of the case than the Government account of it, as contained in that paper, I would have said that it was enough to cover any Government with eternal infamy. Indeed, I don't believe that there is a Government under the sun, save the Pope's, that would have done an atrocity like it. I had some talk with our consul, Mr Freeborn, about that case too, and he assured me that, bad as these cases were, they were not worse than scores, aye, hundreds, that to his knowledge had been perpetrated in Rome, and all over the Papal States, since the return of the Pontifical Government. He added, that if Mr Gladstone would come to Rome, and visit the prisons, and examine the state of the country generally, he would have a more harrowing tale to unfold than that with which he had recently thrilled the British public on the subject of Naples: that in Naples there was still something like trade, but in Rome there was nothing but downright grinding misery.

[Pg 384]

There are few tales in any history more harrowing than the following. The events were posterior to my visit to Rome, and were published at the time in the American *Crusader*. It happened that several papal proconsuls were slain in the city of Faenza: all of them had served under Gregory XVI., in the galleys, as felons and forgers. Being favoured by the papal power, they tried to deserve it by becoming the tyrants of the unhappy population. When the gloomy news of their tragical end reached the Holy Father, the answer returned to the governor of that city, as to what he should do in such a case, as the true perpetrators could not be found, was, "*Arrest all the young men of Faenza!*" and more than a hundred youths were immediately snatched away from the bosom of their families, handcuffed and chained, thrown into the city prisons, and distributed afterwards among the gangs of malefactors, whose lives had been a continual series of robberies and murders! Thirty of these unfortunate victims were marched off to Rome, where they were locked up in a dungeon. Innocent as well as unconscious of the crime of which they were accused, they supplicated the President of the Sacred Consulta,—who is an anointed prelate,—asking only for justice; not for mercy and forgiveness, but for a regular trial. All was useless; the archbishop had neither ear nor heart, and the petition was forgotten. Thinking that, after all, even at Rome, and even among the high dignitaries of the Church of Sodom and Gomorrah, there might be found a man of human feeling, they wrote a second petition, which was this time addressed to a different personage of the Church, his Excellency Mgr. Mertel, Minister of Grace and Justice!

The prisoners asserted to the high papal functionary the illegality of their arrest,—their sufferings without any imputation of guilt,—the painful condition of their families, increased still more by the famine which now desolates the Roman States, and the want of their support. The supplicants were brought before Mgr. Mertel, who, feigning pity and interest for the sufferers (attention, reader!) offered them the choice of *ten years in the chain-gang, or to be transported to the United States, the refugium peccatorum!* They protested; but of what benefit is a legal and natural protest to thirty poor defenceless and guiltless young men, loaded with chains by a papal bureaucrat, surrounded by fifty ruffians armed to the teeth?

[Pg 385]

On the night of the 5th of May 1853, the sepulchral silence of the subterranean prisons of St Angelo was interrupted by the rattling of keys and muskets. The thirty young citizens of Faenza were called out of their dens, and one by one, bending under his fetters, was escorted to a steamer waiting on the muddy Tiber to carry them to a distant land! The beautiful moon of Italy, as some call it, was shining benevolently over Rome and her iniquities; the streets, deserted by the people, were trodden by French patrols; all was silent as the grave itself; and not a friend was there to bid them adieu; not a relative to speak a consoling word to the departing; and none to acquaint the unfortunates who remained behind with their terrible calamity! This was their parting from Rome, at three o'clock, after midnight! But let us follow the victims of papal fury over the wide waters. Cast into the steerage, always handcuffed, the vessel rolling in a heavy and tempestuous sea, these wretched young men remained eighty hours in a painful position, till they reached Leghorn, where they were conducted to the quarantine, as though affected with leprosy and plague, and thence embarked for New York, where they arrived totally destitute of clothes and means of subsistence.

[Pg 386]

The autumn of 1852 will be long remembered in the Papal States, from the occurrence of numerous tragedies of a like deplorable character. Sixty-five citizens of Sinigaglia had been apprehended on the charge of being concerned in the political disturbances of 1848,—an accusation on which the Pope himself might have been apprehended. These citizens, however, had not been so prudent as to turn when the Pope did. In the August of 1852 they were all brought to trial before the Sacra Consulta of Rome, with the exception of thirteen who had made their escape. Twenty-eight of these persons were condemned to the galleys for life, and twenty-four were sentenced to be shot. These unhappy men displayed great unconcern at their execution,—some singing the *Marseillaise*, others crying *Viva Mazzini*. The Swiss troops, not the Austrian soldiers, were made the executioners in this case.

The Sinigaglia trials were followed by similar prosecutions at Ancona, Jesi, Pesaro, and Funa, where unhappy groupes of citizens, indicted for political offences, waited the tender mercies which the "Holy Father" dispenses to his *figli* by the hands of Swiss and Austrian carabinieri. Let us state the result at Ancona.

The executions took place on the 25th of October 1852, and they may be reckoned amongst the most appalling ever witnessed. The sentence was officially published at Rome after the execution, and contained, as usual, simply the names of the judges and the prisoners, a summary of the evidence unsupported by the names of any witnesses, and the penalty awarded—*death*. The victims were nine in number. The sacerdotal Government gave them a priest as well as a scaffold, but only one would accept the insulting mockery. The others, being hopelessly recusant, were allowed to intoxicate themselves with rum. "The shooting of them was entrusted to a detachment of Roman artillerymen, armed with short carbines, old-fashioned weapons, many of which missed fire, so that at the first discharge some of the prisoners did not fall, but ran off, with the soldiers pursuing and firing at them repeatedly; others crawled about; and one wretch, after being considered dead, made a violent exertion to get up, rendering a final *coup de grace* necessary." The writer who recorded these accounts added, that other executions were to follow, and that, if these wholesale slaughters were necessary, they ought, in the dominions of a pontifical sovereign, to be conducted with more delicacy, that is, in a more summary fashion. In truth, such executions are a departure from the approved pontifical method of killing,—which is not by fusillades and in open day, but in silence and night, by the help of the rack and the dungeon.

[Pg 387]

I cannot go into any minute detail of the imprisonments, banishments, and massacres by which the Pope has signalized his return to his palace and the chair of Peter. But I may state a few facts, from which some idea of their number may be gathered. When Pio Nono fled from Rome to Gaeta, what was the amount of its population? Not less than a hundred and sixty thousand. I conversed with a distinguished literary Englishman who chanced to visit Rome at the time I speak of, and who assured me that there could not be fewer than two hundred thousand in Rome then, for Italians had flocked thither from every country under heaven, expecting a new era for their city and nation. But I shall give the Pope the benefit of the smaller number. When he fled, there were, I shall suppose, only a hundred and sixty thousand human beings in his city of Rome. Take the same Rome six months after his return, and how many do you find in it? According to the most credible accounts, the population of the Eternal City had dwindled down to little above a hundred thousand. Here are sixty thousand human beings lacking in this one city. What has become of them? Where have they gone to? I shall suppose that some were fortunate enough to escape to Malta, some to Belgium, some to England, and others to America. I shall suppose that twenty thousand contrived to get away. And let me here do justice to Mr Freeborn, the British consul, who saved much blood by issuing British passports to these unhappy men when the French entered Rome. Twenty thousand, I shall suppose, made good their flight. But thirty thousand and upwards are still lacking. Where are your subjects, Pio Nono? Were we to put this interrogatory to the Pope, he would reply, I doubt not, as did another celebrated personage in history, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But ah! might not the same response as of old be made to this disclaimer, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground?" Again we say, Where are your subjects, Pio Nono? Ask any Roman, and he will tell you where these men are. Ask our own consul, Mr Freeborn, and he will tell you where they are. They are, those of them that have not been shot, rotting at this hour at the bottom of the Pope's dungeons. That is where they are.

[Pg 388]

There is a singular unanimity in Rome amongst all parties, as to the number of political prisoners now under confinement. This I had many opportunities of testing. I met a Roman one evening in a book-shop, and, after a rather lengthened conversation, I said to him, "Can you tell me how many prisoners there are at present in the Roman States?" "No," he replied, "I cannot." "But," I rejoined, "have you no idea of their number?" He solemnly said, "God only knows." I pressed him yet farther, when he stated, that the common estimate, which he believed to be not above the truth, rather under, was, that there were not fewer than thirty thousand political prisoners in the various fortresses and dungeons of the Papal States. Thirty thousand was the estimate of Mr Freeborn. Thirty thousand was the estimate of Mr Stewart, who, mingling with the Romans, knew well the prevailing opinion. Of course, precise accuracy is unattainable in such a case. No one ever counted these prisoners. No list of them is kept,—none that is open to the public eye at least; but it is well known, that there is scarce a family in Rome which does not mourn some of its members lost to it, and scarce an individual who has not an acquaintance in prison; and I have little doubt that the Roman estimate is not far from the truth, and that it is just as likely to be below as above it. When I was in Rome, all the jails in the city were crowded. The cells in the Castle of St Angelo,—those subterranean dungeons where day never dawned, and where the captive's groan can never reach a human ear,—were filled. All the great fortresses throughout the country,—the vast ranges of galley-prisons at Civita Vecchia, the fortress of Ancona, the castle of Bologna, the fortress of Ferrara, and hundreds of minor prisons over the country,—all were filled,—filled, do I say! they were crowded,—crowded to suffocation with choking, despairing victims. In the midst of this congeries of dungeons, surrounded by clanking chains and weeping captives, stands the chair of the "Holy Father."

[Pg 389]

Let us take a look into these prisons, as described to me by reputable and well-informed parties in Rome. These prisons are of three classes. The first class consists of cells of from seven to eight feet square. The space is little more than a man's height when he stands erect, and a man's length when he stretches himself on the floor, and can contain only that amount of atmospheric air necessary for the consumption of one person. These cells are now made to receive two prisoners, who are compelled to divide betwixt them the air adequate for only one. The second class consists of cells constructed to hold ten persons each. In the present great demand for prison-room these are held to afford ample accommodation for a little crowd of twenty persons. Their one window is so high in the wall, that the wretched men who are shut in here are obliged to mount by turns on each other's shoulders, to obtain a breath of air. Last of all comes the common prison. It is a spacious place, containing from forty to fifty persons, who lie day and night on straw too foul for a stable. It matters not what the means of the prisoner may be; he must wear the prison dress, and live on the prison diet. The jailor is empowered, should the slightest provocation be offered, to flog the prisoner, or to load his limbs so heavily with irons, that he scarce can move. And who are they who tenant these places? Violators of the law,—brigands, murderers? No! Those who have been dragged thither are the very *elite* of the Roman population. There many of them lie for years, without being brought to trial; and if they thus escape the scaffold, they perish more slowly, but not less surely, and much more miserably, by the pestilential air, the unwholesome food, and the horrible treatment of the jail. Nor is this the worst of it. I was told by those in Rome who had the best opportunities of knowing, but whose names I do not here choose to mention, that the sufferings of the prisoners had been much aggravated,—indeed, made unendurable,—by the expedient of the Government which confines malefactors and desperadoes along with them. These characters are permitted to have their own way in the prisons; they lord it over the rest, compel them to do the most disgusting offices, and attempt even outrages on their person, which propriety leaves without a name. Their sufferings are indescribable. The consequence of this accumulation of horrors,—foul air, insufficient food, and the fearful society with which the walls and chains of their prison compel them to mingle,—is, that a great many of the prisoners have died, some have sought to terminate their woe by suicide, while others have been carried raving to a madhouse. Mr Freeborn assured me that several of his Roman acquaintances had been carried to these places sane men, as well as innocent men, and, after a short confinement, they had been brought out maniacs and madmen. He would have preferred to have seen them shot at once. It is a prelate who has charge of these prisons.

[Pg 390]

[Pg 391]

I have described the higher machinery which the Pope employs,—the tribunals,—judges,—the secret process,—the tyrannous Gregorian Code; let me next bring into view the inferior machinery of the Pontifical Government. The Roman *sbirri* have an European reputation. One must be no ordinary villain,—he must be, in short, a perfected and finished scoundrel,—to merit a place in this honourable corps. The *sbirri* are chiefly from the kingdom of Naples. They dress in plain clothes, go in twos and threes, are easily distinguished, and are permitted to carry larger walking-sticks than the Romans, whom the French commandant has forbidden to come abroad with any but the merest twig. Some of these spies wear spurs, the better to deceive and to succeed in their fiendish work. No disguise, however, can conceal the *sbirro*. His look, so unmistakably villanous, proclaims the spy. These fellows will not be defeated in their purposes. They carry, it is said, *articles of conviction*, that is, political papers, on their person, which they use, in lack of other material, to compass the ruin of their victim. They can stop any one they please on the street, compel him to produce his papers, and, when they choose not to be satisfied with them, march him off to prison. When they visit a house where they have resolved to make a seizure, they search it; and if they do not find what may criminate the man, they drop the papers they have brought with them, and swear that they found them in the house. What can solemn protestations do against armed ruffians, backed by hireling judges, who, like Impaccianti and Belli, have been taken from the bagnio and the galleys, thrust into orders, and elevated to the bench, to do the work of their patrons?^[7] Such must show that they deserve promotion. The people loathe and dread the *sbirri*, knowing that whatever they do in their official capacity is done well, and speedily followed up by those in authority.

[Pg 392]

But there is a class in the service of the Pontifical Government yet more wicked and dangerous. What! exclaims the reader, more wicked and dangerous than the *sbirri*? Yes, the *sbirri* profess to be only what they are,—the base tools of a tyrannical Government, which seems to thirst insatiably for vengeance; but there exists an invisible power, which the citizen feels to be ever at his side, listening to his every word, penetrating his inmost thought, and ready at any moment to effect his destruction. At noonday, at midnight, in society, in private, he feels that its eye is upon him. He can neither see it nor avoid it. Would he flee from it, he but throws himself into its jaws. I refer to a class of vile and abandoned men, entirely at the service of the Government, whose position in society, agreeable manners, flexibility of disposition, and thorough knowledge of affairs, which they study for base ends, and handle most adroitly in conversation, enable them to penetrate the secret feelings of all classes. They now condemn and now applaud the conduct of Government, as the subject and circumstances require, and all to extract an unfriendly sentiment against those in authority, if such there be in the mind of the man with whom they are conversing. If they succeed, the person is immediately denounced; an arrest follows, or domiciliary restraint. The numbers that have found their way to prison and to the

[Pg 393]

galleys through this secret and mysterious agency are incredible. Nor can any man imagine to himself the dreadful state of Rome under this terrible espionage. The Roman feels that the air around him is full of eyes and ears; he dare not speak; he dreads even to think; he knows that a thought or a look may convey him to prison.

The oppression is not of equal intensity in all cases. Some are subjected only to domiciliary restraint. In this predicament are many respectably connected young men. They are told to consider themselves as prisoners in their own houses, and not to appear beyond the threshold, but at the penalty of exchanging their homes for the common jail. Others, again, whose apparent delinquency has been less, are allowed the freedom of the open air during certain specified hours. At the expiry of this time they must withdraw to their houses: Ave Maria is in many cases the retiring hour.

Another tyrannical proceeding on the part of the Government, which was productive of widespread misery, was the compelling hundreds of people, from the labourer to the man in business, to leave Rome for their place of birth. These measures, which would have been oppressive under any circumstances, were rendered still more oppressive by the shortness of the notice given to those on whom this sentence of expulsion fell. Some had twenty-four hours, and others thirty-six, to prepare for their departure. The labourer might plead that he had no money, and must beg his way with wife and children. The man in business might justly represent that to eject him in this summary fashion was just to ruin him; for his business could not be properly wound up; it must be sacrificed. But no appeal was sustained; no remonstrance was listened to. The stern mandate must be obeyed, though the poor man should die on the road. Go he must, or be conveyed in irons. And, as regards those who were fortunate enough to reach their native villages, alas! their sufferings did then but begin. These villages, in most cases, did not need them, and could afford no opening in the line of business or of labour in which they had been trained. They were houseless and workless in their native place; and, if they did not die of a broken heart, which many of them did, they went "into the country," as they say in Italy,—that is, they became brigands, or are at this hour dragging out the remainder of their lives in poverty and wretchedness.

[Pg 394]

How atrociously, too, have many of the Romans been carried from their business to prison. Against these men neither proof nor witness existed; but a spy had denounced them, or they had fallen under the suspicions of the Government, and there they are in the dungeon. Their families might starve, their business might go to the dogs, but the vengeance of the Government must be satiated. Such persons are confined for a longer or shorter period, according to the view taken of their character or associates; and if nothing be elicited by the secret ordeal of examination, the prison-door is opened, and the prisoner is requested to go home. No apology is offered; no redress is obtained.

Such cases, I was told, were numerous. One such came to my knowledge through Mr Stewart. An acquaintance of his, a druggist, was one day dragged summarily from his business, and lodged in jail, where he was detained a whole month, although to this hour he has not been told what he had done, or said, or thought amiss. During the Constitution this man had been called in, in his scientific capacity simply, to superintend an electric telegraph which ran, if I mistake not, betwixt the Capitol and St Peter's. But beyond this he had taken no political action and expressed no political sentiment whatever. He knew well that this would avail him nothing; and glad he was to escape from incarceration with the remark, *meno male, alias*, it might have been worse.

[Pg 395]

They say that the Inquisition was an affair of the sixteenth century; that its fires are cold; its racks and screws are rusted; and that it would be just as impossible to bring back the Inquisition as to bring back the centuries in which it flourished. That is fine talking; and there are simpletons who believe it. But look at Rome. What is the Government of the Papal States, but just the Government of the Inquisition? There there are midnight apprehensions, secret trials, familiars, torture by flogging, by loading with irons, and other yet more refined modes of cruelty,—in short, all the machinery of the Holy Office. The canon law, whose full blessing Italy now enjoys, is the Inquisition; for wherever the one comes, there the other will follow it. Let me describe the secrecy and terror with which apprehensions are made at Rome. The forms of the Inquisition are closely followed herein. The deed is one of darkness, and the darkest hours of the twenty-four, namely, from twelve till two of the morning, are taken for its perpetration. At midnight half a dozen *sbirri* proceed to the house of the unhappy man marked out for arrest. Two take their place at the door, two at the windows, and two at the back-door, to make all sure. They knock gently at the door. If it is opened, well; if not, they knock a second time. If still it is not opened, it is driven in by force. The *sbirri* rush in; they seize the man; they drag him from his bed; there is no time for parting adieus with his family; they hurry him through the streets to prison. That very night, or the next, his trial is proceeded with,—that is, when it is intended that there shall be further proceedings; for many, as we have said, are imprisoned for long months, without either accusation or trial. But what a mockery is the trial! The prisoner is never confronted with his accuser, or with the impeaching witnesses. He is allowed no opportunity of disproving the charge; sometimes he is not even informed what that charge is. He has no means of defending his life. He has no doubt an advocate to defend him; but the advocate is always nominated by the court, and is usually taken from the partizans of the Government; and nothing would astonish him more than that he should succeed in bringing off his prisoner. And even when he honestly wishes

[Pg 396]

to serve him, what can he do? He has no exculpatory witnesses; he has had no time to expiscate facts; the evidence for the prosecution is handed to him in court; and he can make only such observations as occur at the moment, knowing all the while that the prisoner's fate is already determined on. Sometimes the prisoner, I was told, is not even produced in court, but remains in his cell while his liberty and life are hanging in the balance. At day-break his prison-door opens, and the jailor enters, holding in his hand a little slip of paper. Ah! well does the prisoner know what that is. He snatches it hastily from the jailor's hands, hurries with it to his grated window, through which the day is breaking, holds it up with trembling hands, and reads his doom. He is banished, it may be, or he is sentenced to the galleys; or, more wretched still, he is doomed to the scaffold. Unhappy man! 'twas but last eve that he laid him down in the midst of his little ones, not dreaming of the black cloud that hung above his dwelling; and now by next dawn he is in the Pope's dungeons, parted from all he loves, most probably for ever, and within a few hours of the galleys or the scaffold.

[Pg 397]

I saw these men taken out of Rome morning by morning,—that is, such of them as were banished. They passed under the windows of my own apartment in the Via Babuino. I have seen as many as twenty-four led away of a morning. They were put by half-dozens into carts, to which they were tied by twos, and chained together, as if they had been brigands. Thus they moved on to the Flaminian gate, each cart escorted by a couple of mounted gendarmes. The spectacle, alas! was too common to find spectators; not a Roman followed it, or showed that he was conscious of it, save by a mournful look at the melancholy cavalcade from his window, knowing that what was their lot to-day might be his to-morrow. And what the appearance and apparent profession of these men? Those I saw had much the air of intelligent and respectable artizans; for I believe it is this class that are now bearing the brunt of the papal tyranny. The higher classes were swept off before, and the rage of the Government is now venting itself in a lower and wider sphere. An intelligent Scotchman, who had charge of the one iron-shop in the Corso, informed me that now all the tolerably skilled workmen had been so weeded out of the city by the Pope, that it was scarce possible to find hands to do the little work that requires to be done in Rome. If there be among my readers a mechanic who has been indifferent to the question between this country and the Papacy, as one the settlement of which could not affect his interests either way, I tell him he never made a greater mistake all his life. If the Papacy succeed, his interests will be the very first to suffer, in the ruin of trade. Nor will that suffice; if a skilled man, he will be held to be a dangerous man; and, having taken from him his bread, the Papacy will next take from him his liberty, as she is now doing to his brethren in Rome.

[Pg 398]

And what becomes of the families of these unhappy men? This is the most painful part of the business. Their livelihood is gone; and nothing remains but to go out into the street and beg,—to beg, alas! from beggars. It is not unfrequent in Rome to find families in competence this week, and literally soliciting alms the next. You may see matrons deeply veiled, that they may not be known by their acquaintances, hanging on at the doors of hotels, in the hope of receiving the charity of English travellers. Shame on the tyranny that has reduced the Roman matrons to this! Nor is even this the worst. Deprived of their protectors, moral ruin sometimes comes in the wake of the physical privations and sufferings by which these families are overtaken. Thus the misery of Rome is widening every day. Ah! could I bring before my readers the picture of that doomed city;—could I show them Rome as it sits cowering beneath the shadow of this terrible tyranny;—could I make them see the cloud that day and night hangs above it;—could I paint the sorrow that darkens every face; the suspicion and fear that sadden the Roman's every word and look;—could I tell the number of the broken hearts and the desolate hearths which these old walls enclose;—ah, there is not one among my readers who would not give me his tears as plenteously as ever the clouds of heaven gave their rain. And he who styles himself God's Vicar sees all this misery! Sees it, do I say! he is the author of it. It is to uphold his miserable throne that these prisons are filled, and that these widows and orphans cry in the streets. And yet he tells us that his reign is a model of Christ's reign. 'Tis a fearful blasphemy. When did Christ build dungeons, or gather *sbirri* about him, or send men to the galleys and the scaffold? Is that the account which we have of his ministry? No; it is very different. "The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." A few months ago, when the Pope proclaimed his newest invented dogma,—the Immaculate Conception,—he gave, in honour of the occasion, a grand jubilee to the Roman Catholic world. We all know what a jubilee is. There is a vast treasury above, filled with the merits of Pio Nono and of such as he, out of which those who have not enough for their own salvation may supplement their deficiencies. At the Pope's girdle hangs the key of this treasury; and when he chooses to open it, straightway down there comes a shower of celestial blessings. Well, the Pope told his children throughout the world that he meant to unlock this treasury; and bade his children be ready to receive with open arms and open hearts, this vast beneficence of his. Ah! Pio Nono, this is not the jubilee we wish. Draw your bolts; break the fetters of your thirty thousand captives; open your dungeons, and give back the fathers, the husbands, the sons, the brothers, which you have torn from their families. Put off your robe, quit your palace, take the Bible in your hand, and go round the world preaching the gospel, as your Master did. Do this, and we shall have had a jubilee such as the world has not seen for many a long year. But ah! you but mock us,—bitterly, cruelly mock us,—when you deny us blessings which it is in your power to give, and offer us those which are not yours to bestow. But it is a mockery which will return, and at no distant day, in sevenfold vengeance upon, we say not Pio

[Pg 399]

[Pg 400]

Nono, but the papal system. Untie the fetters of these men; make them free for but a few hours; and with what terrible emphasis will they demand back the friends whom the Papacy has buried in dungeons or murdered on the open scaffold! They will seek their lost sons and brothers with an eye that will not pity, and a hand that will not spare.

CHAPTER XXVII.

[Pg 401]

EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE PAPAL STATES.

Education of a Roman Boy—Seldom taught his Letters—Majority of Romans unable to Read—Popular Literature of Italy—Newspaper of the Roman States—Censorship of the Press—Studies in the Collegio Romano—Rome unknown at Rome—Schools spring up under the Republic—Extinguished on the Return of the Pope—Conversation with three Roman Boys—Their Ideas respecting the Creator of the World, Christ, the Virgin—Questions asked at them in the Confessional—Religion in the Roman States—Has no Existence—Ceremony mistaken for Devotion—Irreverence—The Six Commands of the Church—Contrast betwixt the Cost and the Fruits of the Papal Religion—Popular Hatred of the Papacy.

THE influence of Romanism on trade, and industry, and justice, has been less frequently a theme of discussion than its influence on knowledge. While, therefore, I have dwelt at considerable length on the former, I shall be very brief under the present head. I shall here adduce only a few facts which I had occasion to see or hear during my stay in the Papal States. The few schoolmasters which are found in Italy are not a distinct class, as with us; they are priests, and mostly Jesuits. There are three classes of catechisms used in the schools; the pupil beginning with the lowest, and of course finishing off with the highest. But of what subjects do these catechisms treat? A little history, one would say, that the pupil may have some notion of what has been before him; and a little geography, that he may know there are such things as land and sea, and cities beyond, which he cannot see, shut up in Rome. With us, the lowest amount of education that ever receives the name comprises at least the three R's, as they are termed,—Reading, Writing, and 'Rithmetic. But these are far too mundane matters for a Jesuit to occupy his time in expounding. The education of the Italian youth is a thoroughly religious one, taking the term in its Roman sense. The little catechisms I have spoken of are filled with the weightier matters of their law,—the miracles wrought by the staff of this saint, the cloak of that other, and the relics of a third; the exalted rank of the Virgin, and the homage thereto appertaining; Transubstantiation, with all the uncouth and barbarous jargon of "substances" and "accidents" in which that mystery is wrapped up. An initiation into these matters forms the education of the Roman boy; and after he has been locked up in school for a certain length of time, he is turned adrift, to begin the usual aimless life of the Italian. It does not follow, because he has been at school, that he can read. He is seldom taught his letters; better not, lest in after life he should come in contact with books. And, despite the vigilance of the censorship and the Index, bad books, such as the Bible, are finding their way into the Roman States; and it is better, therefore, not to entrust the people with the key of knowledge; for nothing is so useless as knowledge under an infallible Church. The matters which the Italian youth are taught they are taught by rote. "Ignorance is the mother of devotion,"—a maxim sometimes quoted with a sneer, but one which embodies a profound truth as regards that kind of devotion which is prevalent at Rome.

[Pg 402]

I have seen estimates by Gavazzi and other Italians, of the proportion who can read in the Roman States. It is somewhere about one in a hundred. The reader will take the statement at what it is worth. I had no means of testing its accuracy; but all my inquiries on the subject led me to believe that the overwhelming majority cannot read. And where is the use of learning one's letters in a land where there are no books; and there are none that deserve the name in Rome. The book-stalls in Italy are heaped with the veriest rubbish: the "Book of Dreams," "Rules for Winning at the Lottery," "The Five Dolours of the Virgin," "Tracts on the Miracles of the Saints," "Relations," professedly given by Christ about his sufferings, and said to have been found in his sepulchre, and in other places equally likely. At Rome, on the streets at least, where all other kinds of rubbish are tolerated, even this rubbish is not suffered to exist; for there, book-stalls I saw none. There are, however, one or two miserable book-shops where these things may be had.

[Pg 403]

There was but one newspaper (so called, I presume, because it contained no news) published in Rome at the time of my visit,—the *Giornale di Roma*, which, I presume, still occupies the field alone. It contains a daily list of the arrivals and departures (foreigners, of course, for the gates of Rome never open to the Romans), the proclamations of the Government, the days of the lottery, and such matters. Under the foreign head were chronicled the consecration of Catholic temples, the visits of royal personages, a profound silence being observed on all political facts and speculations. And this is all the Romans can know, through legitimate channels, of what is going on beyond the walls of Rome. A daily paper was started during the Republic, and admirably managed; but, of course, it was suppressed on the return of the Papal Government. A few copies of the *Times* reach Rome every morning. They are not given out till towards mid-day, for they must first be read; and if the "editorials" are not to the taste of the Sacred College, they are not given out at all. The paper, during my short stay, was stopped for nearly a week on end; and the

[Pg 404]

disappointment was the greater, that rumours were then current in Rome that something was on the tapis in Paris, and that the change in the constitution of France, whatever it might be, would not be postponed till the May of 1852, as was then believed in the north of Europe, but would be attempted in the beginning of December 1851. The tidings of the *coup d'etat*, which met me on the morning of the 3d December in the south of France, brought the full realization of these rumours. In the *Giornale di Roma* not a strayed dog can be advertised without permission of the censor. In Brescia there is a censorship for gravestones; and in Rome a strict watch is kept over the English burying-ground, lest any one should write a verse of Scripture above a heretic's grave. The expression of thought is more dreaded than brigandage.

Those who aspire to the learned professions go to the Collegio Romano. But let the reader mark how the Roman Church here, as everywhere else, contrives to keep up the show of educating, and takes care all the while to impart the smallest possible amount of knowledge,—constructs a machinery which, through some mischievous perversion, is without results. The Collegio Romano has a numerous staff of professors, who prelect on theology, logic, history, mathematics, natural philosophy, and other branches. This looks well; but observe its working. All the lectures are delivered in Latin, which differs considerably from the modern Italian; and as the Roman youth spend only one year in the study of the Latin tongue before entering the Collegio Romano, the lectures might nearly as well, so far as the run of the students is concerned, be in Arabic. Nine-tenths of the young men leave the Collegio Romano as learned as they entered it. The higher priesthood are educated at the *Sapienza*, where, I believe, a thorough training in theological dialectics is given.

[Pg 405]

It is impossible not to see that the Italians are a people of quick perceptions, lively sensibilities, and warm and kindly dispositions; but it is just as impossible not to see that they are deplorably untaught. The stranger is mortified to find that he knows far more of their ruins and of their past history than they themselves do. The peasant wanders over the huge mounds that diversify the Seven Hills, or traverses the Appian, or passes under the arch of Titus, without knowing or caring who erected these structures, or having even a glimmering of the heroic story in which they were, so to speak, the actors. When he looks back into the past, all is night. Nowhere is Rome so little known as in Rome itself. How different was it when the Pope received Italy! Then Italy occupied the van of civilization. And when the Byzantine empire fell, and the scholars of the East fled westward, carrying with them the rich treasures of the Greek language and literature, learning had a second morning in Italy. Famous colleges arose, to which the youth of Europe repaired. Philosophers and poets of imperishable name shed a lustre upon the country; but the Roman Church soon discovered that Italy was acquiring knowledge at the expense of its Romanism, and she applied the band to the national mind. And now that same Italy that once held aloft the lamp of knowledge to the world is herself in darkness, and, sad sight! is seen, with quenched orbs, groping about in the midnight.

And yet proofs are not wanting to show that, were the interdict of the Church taken off, Italy would at once throw herself into the race, and might soon rival the most successful of her contemporaries. Most of my readers, I doubt not, are familiar with the name of M. Leone Levi, now engaged on the great work of the codification of the commercial laws of the three kingdoms, and their assimilation to the continental codes. The fact I am now to state, and which speaks volumes as regards the efforts of "the Church" to educate Italy, I had from this gentleman; and to those who know him, any testimony of mine to his intelligence and uprightness is superfluous. M. Leone Levi, an Italian Jew, was born at Ancona, but eventually settled in England. During the Roman Republic, he paid a visit to Italy. But such a change! He scarce knew his native Italy,—it was so unlike the Italy he had left. In every town, and village, and rural district, schools had sprung up since the fall of the Pontifical Government. There were day-schools and night-schools, week-day-schools and Sabbath-schools. The young men and young women had forgotten their "light loves," and were busied in educating themselves, and in educating the little boys and girls below them. The country appeared to have resolved itself into a great educational institute. He was inexpressibly delighted. Such a change he had never dared to hope for in his native land. But ah! back came the Pope; and in a week,—in one short week,—every one of these schools was closed. The Roman youth are again handed over to the Jesuit. Italy is again sunk in its old torpor and stagnation; and one black cloud of barbaric ignorance extends from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic.

[Pg 406]

I sat down one day on the steps of the temple of Vesta, which, though gray and crumbling with age, is one of the most beautiful of the ruins of Rome. Three boys came about me to beg a few baiocchi. The youngest boy, I found, was ten years, and the oldest fifteen. I took the opportunity of putting a few questions to them, judging them a fair sample of the Roman youth. My queries were pitched low enough. "Can you tell me," I asked, "who made the world?" The question started a subject on which they seemed never to have thought before. They stood in a muse for some seconds; and then all three looked round them, as if they expected to see the world's Maker, or to read His name somewhere. At last the youngest and smartest of the three spoke briskly up,—"The masons, Signor." It was now my turn to feel the excitement of a new idea. Yet I thought I could see the train of thought that led to the answer. The masons had made the baths of Caracalla; the masons had made the Coliseum, and those other stupendous structures which in bulk rival the hills, and seem as eternal as the earth on which they rest; and why might not the

[Pg 407]

masons have made the whole affair? I might have puzzled the boy by asking, "But who made the masons?" My object, however, was simply to ascertain the amount of his knowledge. I demurred to the proposition that the masons had made the world, and desired them to try again. They did try again, and at last the eldest of the three found his way to the right answer,—"God." "Have you ever heard of Christ?" I asked. "Yes." "Who is he? Can you tell me anything about him?" I could elicit nothing under these heads. "Whose Son is he?" I then asked. "He is Mary's Son," was the reply. "Where is Christ?" I inquired. "He is on the Cross," replied the boy, folding his arms, and making the representation of a crucifix. "Was Christ ever on earth?" I asked. He did not know. "Are you aware of anything he ever did?" He had never heard of anything that Christ had done. I saw that he was thinking of those hideous representations which are to be seen in all the churches of Rome, of a man hanging on a cross. That was the Christ of the boys. Of Christ the Son of the living God,—of Christ the Saviour of sinners,—and of his death as an atonement for human guilt,—they had never heard. In a city swarming with professed ministers of the gospel, these boys knew no more of Christianity than if they had been Hottentots. I next inquired respecting Mary, and here the boys seemed more at home. "Who is she?" "She is God's mother." "Where is she?" "She is in that church," pointing to the church on one side of the piazza,—the Bocca di Verita, if I mistake not,—before which criminals are sometimes executed; "and in that," pointing to the church on the other side of the piazza. "She is here, there, everywhere." "Was Mary ever on earth?" "Yes," was the answer. "What did she do when here?" "Oh," replied the little boy, "that is an antique affair: I was not here then." "Do you go to church?" I asked the eldest boy. "Yes." "Do you take the sacrament?" "I have taken it four times." I learned afterwards that the priests are attempting to seize upon the rising generation in Italy, by compelling all the children from twelve years and upwards to go to mass. "Do you go to confession?" I next asked. "Yes, I confess." "Do other boys and girls, your acquaintances, go to confession?" "Yes, all go," he replied. "We meet the priest in church on Sabbath, and he tells us when to come and confess." "Well, when you go to confess, what does the priest ask you?" "He asks me if I steal, and do other bad actions." "When you confess that you have done a bad action, what then?" "The first time I do it, the priest pardons me." "If you confess it a second time, what happens?" "The second time he beats me with a rod." "Does the priest ask you about anything else?" I inquired. "Yes," he rejoined; "he asks me about my father and my mother." "What does he ask you about them?" "He asks me if they do dirty actions," said the boy. Now, here the enormity and vileness of the confessional peeped out. Here one can see how the confessor can look into every hearth, and into every heart, in Rome. The priests had dragged this young boy into their den, and taught him to play the spy on his father and mother. The hand that fed him, the bosom that cherished him, he must learn to betray. I appeal to the fathers and mothers of Britain, whether, than see their children degraded to such infamous purposes, they would not an hundred times rather see them laid in the silent grave. Yet some are labouring to introduce the confessional among us. Should they succeed, it will be the garrotte on the throat of English liberty.

[Pg 408]

[Pg 409]

As regards RELIGION in Italy, this is an inquiry that lies rather beyond the limits I have marked out for myself. I may be permitted, however, a few remarks. It appeared to me that the very idea of religion had perished among the Italians. Not only had they lost the thing itself, but they had lost the power of conceiving of it. Religion unquestionably is a state of mind towards God; and devotion is a mental act resulting from that state of mind. We cannot conceive of an automaton performing an act of devotion, or of being religious; and yet, if religion be what it is taken to be at Rome, there is nothing to hinder an automaton being religious, nay, far more religious than flesh and blood, inasmuch as timber and iron will not so soon wear out under incessant crossings and genuflections. Religion at Rome is to kiss a crucifix; religion at Rome is to climb Pilate's stairs; religion at Rome is to repeat by rote a certain number of prayers before some beautiful painting or statue; or to remain a certain number of hours on one's bare knees on the paved floor; or to wear a hair-shirt. Of religion as a mental act,—as an act of faith, and love, and reverence,—the Italian is not able to form even the idea. Hence the want of decorum that shocks a stranger on visiting the Italian churches. He finds bishops at the altar unable to restrain their sallies of wit and their bursts of laughter. And after this, what can he look for among the ordinary worshippers? The young man can go through his devotions perfectly well, and make love all the while to the young woman at his side. Young ladies can count their beads to the Virgin, and continue their gossip on matters of dress or scandal. It never occurs to them that this in the least deteriorates their worship. The beads have been counted, and an Ave Maria said with each; and what more does the Church require? Religion as a feeling of the mind, and devotion as an act of the soul, are unknown to them. I recollect meeting in the rural lanes leading from St John Lateran to the church of Maria Maggiore, a small party of Roman girls, who were strangely mixing mirth and worship,—chatting, laughing, and singing hymns to the Virgin,—just as Scotch maidens on a harvest field might diversify their labours with "Home, Sweet Home," or any other air. This irreverent familiarity shows itself in other ways, after the manner of the ancient pagans, who took strange liberties with their gods. When the drawing of the lottery is about to take place, the Romans most devoutly supplicate the Virgin for success; but should their number come out a blank, they may be heard reviling her in the open street, and applying to her every conceivable epithet of abuse.

[Pg 410]

So far as the moral code of Romanism is concerned, sinless perfection is no difficult attainment. The commands of the Church are six; and these six have quite thrown into the shade the ten of the decalogue. They are the payment of tithes,—the not marrying in the prohibited

seasons,—the hearing of mass on Sundays and festivals,—the keeping of the prescribed fasts,—confession once a-year at least,—and the taking of the communion in Easter week. The last two are strictly enforced. On the approach of Easter, the priest goes round and gives a ticket to every parishioner; and if these are not returned through the confessional, a policeman waits on the person, and tells him that he has been remiss in his religious duties, and must submit himself to the Church's discipline, which he, the Church's officer, has come to administer to him in the Church's penitentiary or dungeons. Innumerable are the methods taken by the Romans to evade confession, among which the more common is to hire some one to confess for them. Others, though they go, confess nothing of moment. "You all here believe in the Pope and purgatory," I remarked to a commissario one day. "A few old women do," he replied. "Do *you* not believe in them?" I asked. "I believe in one God; but I do not believe in one priest," said he. "I hope you will say so next time you go to confession," I observed. "I don't confess," he replied. "How can you avoid confessing?" I enquired. "I pay an old woman," he answered, "who can confess for me every day if she pleases." There is not a greater contrast in the world than that which exists betwixt the cost of the papal religion and its fruits,—betwixt the numbers and wealth of the clergy, and the knowledge and morality of the people. Under these heads we append below some very instructive notices.^[8]

[Pg 411]

In fine, one word will suffice to describe the religion of Rome; and that word is ATHEISM. There may be exceptions, but as a general rule the Romans believe in nothing. And how can it be otherwise? Of the gospel they know absolutely nothing beyond what the priest tells them; even that he, the priest, can change a wafer into God, and, by giving it to people to eat, can save them from hell. This the Romans cannot believe; and therefore their creed is a negation. In the room of indifference, which could not be said to believe or disbelieve, because it never thought on the subject, has now come intense hatred of the Papacy, from the destruction of the nation's hopes under Pio Nono. He who seven years ago heard the streets of Rome echoing to the cry that she alone was *La Regina delle Genti*,—"sat a queen, and should see no sorrow,"—can best form an estimate of the terrible re-action that has followed the tumult of that hour, and can best understand how it has happened, that now the hatred wherewith the Italians hate the Papacy is greater than the love wherewith they loved it. Tradition, by its fooleries,—the mass, by its monstrosity,—the priest, by his immoralities,—and, above all, the Pope, by his perfidy and tyranny,—have made the papal religion to stink in the nostrils of the great mass of the Roman people. You might as well look for religion in pandemonium itself, as in a country groaning under such a complication of vices and miseries. Nay, there is more faith in pandemonium than in Rome; for we are told that the devils believe and tremble; but in Rome, generally speaking, there is faith in nothing. And for this fearful state of matters the Papacy, beyond all question, is responsible.

[Pg 412]

[Pg 413]

[Pg 414]

CHAPTER XXVIII.

[Pg 415]

MENTAL STATE OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN ITALY.

First Impressions in Rome erroneous—The unseen Rome—Her devotement to one thing—In what light do the Priests in Italy regard their own System?—Can they possibly believe their Cheats to be Miracles?—A goodly number of the Priests Infidels—Others never thought on the subject—Some have strong Misgivings—Others convinced of the Falsehood of that Church, but lack Courage or Opportunity to leave it—Making Allowance for all these Classes, the Majority of Priests do believe in their System—The Explanation of this—The real Ruler in the Church of Rome, not the Pope, nor the Cardinals, nor the Jesuits, but the System—Human Machinery—The Pontiff—The College of Cardinals—Antonelli—The Bishops and Priests—The Jesuits—Their Activity and Importance at Rome—Their Appearance described.

WHEN an Englishman visits the Eternal City, he is very apt, during the first days of his sojourn, to underrate the power and influence of the Papal system. At home he has been used to see power associated with splendour, and surrounded with the fruits and monuments of intelligence. At Rome everything on which he sets his eye bears marks of a growing barbarism and decay. Outside the walls of the city is a vast desert, attesting the utter extinction of industry. Within is an air of stagnation and idleness, which bespeaks the utter absence of all mental activity. A very considerable portion of the population have no occupation but begging. The naked heads, necks, and feet of the monks and friars are offensive from want of cleanliness. The higher ecclesiastics even are coarse and vulgar men. The fine monuments reared by the taste and wealth of former ages want keeping. Their churches, despite the paintings and statuary with which they are filled, are rendered disagreeable by the beggars that haunt them, and the incense that is continually burned in them. Their very processions do not rise above a tawdry half-barbaric grandeur; and one must be far gone in the Puseyite malady before such exhibitions can inspire him with anything like reverence. The visitor looks around on this strange scene, so unlike what his imagination had pictured, and exclaims, "Where and in what lies the secret of this city's power?" Here there is neither art, nor industry, nor wealth, nor knowledge! Here all the bodily and all the mental faculties of man appear to be folded up in a worse than mediæval stupor. Where are the

[Pg 416]

elements of that power for which this city is renowned, and by which she is able to thwart and control the civilized and powerful Governments of the north of Europe? Would, says he to himself, that those who venerate Rome when divided from her by the Alps and the ocean, would come here and see with their own eyes her contemptible vileness and inconceivable degradation; and that those statesmen who are moved by a secret fear to bow the knee to her, would come hither and mark the baseness of her before whom they are content to lower the honour and independence of their country! Such, we say, are the first impressions of the visitor to Rome.

But a few days suffice to correct this erroneous estimate. The person looks around him; he looks below him. There he discovers the real Rome. It is not the Rome that is seen,—it is the Rome that is unseen,—before which the nations tremble. Beneath his feet are tremendous agencies at work. There are the pent-up fires that shake the globe. Rome, cut off from all the world, and surrounded by leagues of silent and blackened deserts, is the centre of energies that rest not day nor night, and the action of which is felt at the very extremities of the earth. It seems, indeed, as if Rome had been set free from all the anxieties and labours which occupy the minds and hands of the rest of the world, of very purpose that she might attend to only one thing. The labours of the husbandman and the artificer she has forborne. Like the lilies of the field, she toils not, neither does she spin. She sits in the midst of her deserts, like the sorceress on the heath, or the conspirator in his den, hatching plots against the world. Rome is the pandemonium of the earth, and the Pope is the Lucifer of the world's drama. Fallen he is from the heaven of power and grandeur which he occupied in the twelfth century; and he and his compeers lie sunk in a very gulph of anarchy and barbarism. Lifting up his eyes, he beholds afar off the happy nations of Protestantism, reaping the reward of a free Bible and a free Government, in the riches of their commerce and the stability of their power. The sight is tormenting and intolerable, and the pontiff is stung thereby into ceaseless attempts to retrieve his fall. If he cannot mount to his old seat, and sit there once more in superhuman pride and unapproachable power above the bodies and the souls of men, he may at least hope to draw down those he so much envies into the same gulph with himself. Hence the villainies and plots of all kinds of which Rome is full, and which form a source of danger to the nations of Christendom, from which they may hope to be delivered only when the Papacy shall have been finally destroyed.

[Pg 417]

What I propose here is to sketch the *mental state* of the priests of Italy, so far as my opportunities enabled me to judge. The subject is more recondite than the foregoing; the facts are less accessible; and my statements must partake more of the inferential than did those embraced in the former branches of the subject.

[Pg 418]

The first question that arises is, in what light do the priests in Italy regard their own system? Do they look upon it as an unrivalled compound of imposture and tyranny,—a cunning invention for procuring mitres, tiaras, purple robes, and other good things for themselves? or do they regard it as indeed founded in truth, and clothed with the sanction of heaven? They are behind the scenes, and have access to see and hear many things which are not meant for the eye and ear of the public. The man who pulls the strings of a winking Madonna can scarce persuade himself, one should think, that the movement that follows is the effect of supernatural power. The priest who liquefies the blood of St Januarius by the warmth of his hand or the warmth of the fire, must know that what he has performed is neither more nor less than a very ordinary juggle. The monk who falls a rummaging in the Catacombs, or in any of the old graveyards about Rome, and finds there a parcel of decayed bones, which he passes off as those of Saint Theodosia or Saint Anathanasius, but which are as likely to be the bones of an old pagan, or a Goth, or a brigand, can hardly believe, one should suppose, his own tale. If the Pope believes in his own relics, what conceptions must he have of Peter? What a strange configuration of body must he believe the apostle to have had! Peter must have been a man with some dozen of heads; with a score of arms, and a hundred fingers or so on each arm; in short, a perfect realization of the old pagan fable of the giant Briareus. The Pope must believe this, or he must believe that he gives his attestation to what is not true. Above all, one can hardly imagine it possible that any man in whom reason had not been utterly quenched could believe in the monstrous dogma of transubstantiation. What! can a priest at any hour he pleases give existence to Him who exists from eternity? Can he enclose within a little silver box that Almighty One whom the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain? Let a man confess at the bar of the High Court of Edinburgh that he believes himself to be God, and the Court will pronounce that that man is insane, and will hold him incompetent to manage his affairs. And yet every Roman Catholic priest professes to believe a more startling dogma,—even that he is the creator of God. And yet, instead of calling that insanity, we must, I suppose, call it religion. Seeing, then, the priests are called every day to do things which their senses must tell them are juggles, and to profess their belief in dogmas which their reason must tell them are monstrous and blasphemous absurdities, is it possible, you ask, that the priests in Italy can believe in their own system? I must here say, that I do think the majority of them do believe in it.

[Pg 419]

A goodly number of the priests of Italy are infidels. They no more believe in the Pope than they believe in the pagan Jupiter. But then, were they to speak out their disbelief, and to say that purgatory is a mere bugbear for frightening men and getting their money, they know that a dungeon would instantly be their lot; and infidelity has little of the martyr spirit in it. These men, like Leo the Tenth, as thorough an infidel as ever lived, hold that it would be the height of folly to

quarrel with a fable that brings them so much gain. Others are mere worldly men. They were never at the pains to inquire whether their system is true or false. They sing their mass in the morning; they pass their forenoons at the café, sipping coffee, and taking a hand at cards; a stoup of wine washes down a substantial dinner; and, after a saunter along the Corso, or an airing on the Pincian, they doff their clerical vestments, and go to sup with the nuns, who have the reputation of being excellent cooks.

[Pg 420]

Others there are whose minds are occasionally visited by strong misgivings. The cloud, so to speak, will open for a moment, and reveal to their astonished sight, not the majestic form of Truth, but a gigantic and monstrous imposture. A mysterious hand at times lifts the veil, and lo! they find themselves in the presence, not of a divinity, but of a demon. They disclose their doubts when they next go to confession. My son, says the father confessor, these are the suggestions of the Evil One. You must arm yourself against the Tempter by fasting and penance. A hair shirt or an iron girdle is called in to silence the voice of reason and the remonstrances of conscience; and here the matter ends. And there are a few—in every age there have been a few such—in the Church of Rome, and at present they are very considerably on the increase, who, in the midst of darkness, by some wondrous means have seen the light. A tract, a Bible, or some Protestant friend whom Providence had thrown in their way, or some one of the few passages of Scripture inserted in their Breviary, may have taught them a better way than that of Rome. Instead of stopping short at the altar of Mary, or at any of the thousand shrines which Rome has erected as so many barriers between the sinner and God, they go at once to the Divine mercy-seat, and pour their supplications direct into the ear of the Great Mediator. You ask, why do these men remain in a Church which they see to be apostate? Fain would they fly, but they know not how or where. They lift their eyes to the Alps on the one side,—to the ocean on the other. Alas! they may surmount these barriers; but more difficult still than to scale the mountains or to traverse the ocean is it to escape beyond the power of Rome. Woe to the unhappy man who begins to feel his fetters! He awakes to find that he is in a wide prison, with a sentinel posted at every outlet: escape seems hopeless; and the man buries his secret in his breast.

[Pg 421]

Some few there are who, more daring by nature, or specially strengthened from above, adventure on the immense hazards of flight. Of these, some are caught, thrown into a dungeon, and are heard of no more. Others find their way to England, or some other Protestant State. But here new trials await them. They are ignorant of our language perhaps. They find themselves among strangers, whose manners seem to them cold and distant. They are without means of living; and, carrying with them too, it may be, some of the stains of their former profession, they encounter difficulties which are the more stumbling that they are unexpected. On these various grounds, the number of priests who leave the Church of Rome has been, and always will be, small, till some great revolution or upbreak takes place in that Church.

But, making the most ample allowance for all these classes,—for the men who are atheists and infidels,—for the mere worldings, whose only tie to their Church is the gain it brings them,—and for those who are either doubters, or whose doubts have passed into full conviction that the Church of the Pope is not the Church of Jesus Christ,—making, I say, full allowance for all these, I have little doubt that the majority of the priests in Italy,—it may be not much more than a majority, but still a majority,—are sincere believers in their system.

They are not ignorant of the frauds, the knaveries, the fables, and hypocrisies, by which that system is supported. They cannot shut their eyes to these, which they regard, in fact, as sanctified by the end to which they are devoted; but they separate between these and the system itself; and though they cannot tell the line where truth ends and falsehood begins, still they look upon their system, on the whole, as founded in truth, and carrying with it the sanction of Heaven. Indeed, belief is a weak term to express the power the system has over them. It is rather a paralyzing awe, a freezing terror, like that with which his grim deity inspires the barbarian, which holds captive the strongest mind, and lays reason and conscience prostrate in the dust. Such I believe to be the state of mind of the greater number of the Italian priesthood.

[Pg 422]

But how comes this? What is it which has produced this universal slavery? Is it the Pope? Is it the cardinals? Is it the Jesuits? No; for these men, though the tyrants of others, are themselves slaves. All are bound by the same chain of adamant, to the car of the same demon. A mournful procession of dead men truly, with the triple crown in front, and the sandals of the barefooted Capuchin bringing up the rear. What is it, I repeat, that holds the whole body in subjection, from the Pope down to the friar? It is the system, the abstract system, with its overwhelming prestige,—that system which lives on though popes die; the genius of the Papacy, if you will. This is the real monarch of that spiritual kingdom.

A little power of mental abstraction,—and the subtle genius of the Italian gives him that power in a high degree,—will enable any one to separate betwixt the system and its agents. Some one has remarked, that he could form an abstraction of a lord mayor, not only without his horse, and gown, and gold chain, but even without the stature, features, hands, and feet of any particular lord mayor. The same can be done of the Papacy. We can form an abstraction of the Papacy not only without the tiara and the keys, but even without the stature and lineaments, the hands and feet, of any particular Pope. When we have formed such an abstraction, we have got the real ruler of the Papacy. That it is the system that is the dominant power in the Church of

[Pg 423]

Rome, is evident from this one fact, namely, that councils have sometimes deposed the Pope to save the Papacy. There is in the Pope's kirk, then, a power greater than the Pope. The system has taken body and shape, as it were, and sits upon the Seven Hills, a mysterious, awe-inspiring divinity or demon; and the Pope, equally with the friar, bows his head and does obeisance. Wherever the pontiff looks,—whether backward into history, or around him in the world,—there are the monuments of this ever living, ever present, and all pervading power. It requires more force than the mind of fallen man is capable of, to believe that a system which has filled history with its deeds and the world with its trophies, which has compelled the homage of myriads and myriads of minds, and before which the haughtiest conquerors and the most puissant intellects have bowed with the docility of children, is, after all, an unreality,—a mere spectre of the middle ages,—a ghost conjured up by credulity and knavery from the tombs of defunct idolatries. This, I say, is the true state of things in Italy. Its priesthood are subdued by their own system,—by its high claims to antiquity,—its world-wide dominion,—its imposing though faded magnificence,—its perverted logic,—its pseudo sanctity. These not only carry it over the reason, but in some degree over the senses also; and the more fully persuaded the priests are of the truth and divinity of their system, they feel only the more fully warranted to employ fraud and force in its support,—the winking Madonna to convince one class, and the dungeon and the iron chain to silence the other.

Having spoken of the abstract and spiritual power that reigns over Italy, and, I may say, over the whole Catholic world, let me now speak of the corporeal and human machinery by which the Papacy is carried on. [Pg 424]

First comes the Pope. Pio Nono is a man of sixty-three. His years and the various misfortunes of his reign sit lightly upon him. Were the Pope much given to reflection, there are not wanting unpleasant topics enough to darken the clear Italian sunlight, as it streams in through the windows of the Vatican palace. Once was he chased from Rome; and now that he is returned, can he call Rome his own? Not he. The real master of Rome is the commandant of the French garrison. And while outside the walls are the dead whom he slew with the sword of France, inside are the living, whose sullen scowl or fierce glare he may see through the French files, as he rides out of an afternoon.^[9] But Pio Nono takes all in good part. There is not a wrinkle on his brow; no unpleasant thought appears to shade the jovial light of his broad face. He sits down to dinner with evidently a good appetite; he sleeps soundly at night, and troubles not his poor head by brooding over misfortunes which he cannot mend, or charging himself with the direction of plots which he is not competent to manage. But, if not fitted to take the lead in cabinets, nature has formed him to shine in a procession. He has a portly figure, a face radiant with blandness, dissimulation, and vanity; and he looks every inch the Pope, as he is carried shoulder-high in St Peter's, and sits blazing in his jewelled tiara and purple robes, between two huge fans of peacocks' feathers. To these accomplishments he adds that of a fine voice; and when he gives his blessing from the balcony of St Peter's, or assembles the Romans in the Forum, as he did on a late occasion, when he lifted up hands dripping with his subjects' blood, to call his hearers to repentance, his tones ring out, in the deep calm air of Rome, clear and loud as those of a bell. Such is the man who is the nominal head of the Papacy. We say the *nominal* head; for such a system as the Papacy, involving the consideration of so many interests, and requiring such skilful steering to clear the rocks and quicksands amid which the bark of Peter is now moving, demands the presence at the helm of a steadier hand and a clearer eye than those of Pio Nono. [Pg 425]

I come next to the College of Cardinals. In so large a body we find, as might be expected, various grades of both intellectual and moral character; and of course there are the corresponding indications on their faces. An overbearing arrogance, which always communicates to the countenance an air of vulgarity, more or less, is a very prevailing trait. The average intellect in the sacred college is not so high as one would expect in men who have risen to the top of their profession; and for this reason, perhaps, that birth has fully more to do with their elevation than talent or services. One scrutinises their faces curiously when one remembers that these men are the living representatives of the apostles. They profess to hold the rank, to be clothed with the functions, and to inherit the supernatural endowments, of the first inspired preachers. There you may look for the burning eloquence of a Paul, the boldness of a Peter, the love of a John, the humility, patience, zeal, of all. You go round the circle, and examine one by one the faces of these living Pauls and Peters. Verily, if their prototypes were like their modern representatives, the spread of the gospel at first was by far the mightiest miracle the world ever saw. On one you find the unmistakeable marks of sordid appetite and self-indulgence: on another, low intrigue has imprinted the most sinister lines: a third is a mere man of the world;—his prayers and vigils have been kept at the shrine of pleasure. But along with much that is sordid and worldly, there are astute and far-seeing minds in the sacred college; and foremost in this class stands Antonelli. His pale face, and clear, cold, penetrating eye, reveal the presiding genius of the Papacy. He is the Prime Minister of the Pope; and though his is not the brow on which the tiara sits, he is the real head of the system. From his station on the Seven Hills his keen eye watches and directs every movement in the papal world. Those mighty projects which the Papacy is endeavouring to realize in every part of the earth have their first birth in his fertile and daring brain. [Pg 426]

His family are well known at Rome, and some of his ancestors were men of renown in their

own way. His uncle was the most famous Italian brigand of modern times, and his exploits are still celebrated in the popular songs of the country. The occupation of the yet more celebrated nephew is not so dissimilar after all; for what is Antonelli, but the leader of a crew of bandits, whose hordes scour Europe, arrayed in sacerdotal garb, and in the name of heaven rob men of their wealth, their liberty, and their souls, and carry back their booty to their den on the Seven Hills.

Next come the Bishops and Priests. These men are the agents and spies of the cardinals, as the cardinals of the Pope. The time which they are required to devote to spiritual, or rather, I should say, to official duties, is small indeed. To study the Scriptures, visit the sick, instruct the people, which form the proper work of ministers of the gospel, are duties altogether unknown in Rome. There, as I have said, they convert and save men, not by preaching, but by giving them wafers to swallow. This is a short and simple process; and when a priest has gone through this pantomime once, he can repeat it all his days after without the slightest preparation. Their time and energies, therefore, can be almost wholly devoted to other work. And what is that work? It is, in short, to propagate their superstition, and rivet the fetters of the priesthood upon the population. The bishops and priests manage the upper classes; and for the lower grades of Romans there are friars and monks of every order and of every colour. The city swarms with these men. The frogs and lice of Egypt were not more numerous, and certainly not more filthy. Unwashed and uncombed, they enter, with their sandalled feet and shaven crowns, every dwelling, and penetrate into every bosom. You see them in the wine-shops; you see them mixing with the populace on the street; while others, with wallets on their backs, may be seen climbing the stairs of the houses, for the double purpose of begging for the poor, but in reality for their own paunch, and of retailing the latest miracle, or some thousand times told legend. Thus the darkness is carried down to the very bottom of society; and while the Pope and his cardinals sit at the summit in gilded glory, the monk, in robe of serge and girdle of rope, is busied at the bottom; and, to support their individual and united action, the priests have two powerful institutions at Rome, like foot soldiers advancing under cover of artillery,—the Confessional and the Inquisition.

[Pg 427]

But emphatically *the* order at Rome is the Jesuits. They are the prime movers in all that is done there, as well as the keenest supporters of the Papacy in all parts of the world. They are the most indefatigable confessors, as well as the most eloquent preachers. Their regularity is like that of nature itself. Every hour of the day has its duty; and their motions are as punctual as that of the heavenly bodies. Duly every morning as the clock strikes five, they are at the altar or in the confessional. Their head-quarters are at the Gesu. I shall suppose that the reader is passing through the long corridor of that magnificent church. Every three or four paces is a door, leading to a small apartment, which is occupied by a father. Outside each door hangs a sheet of paper, on which the father puts a list of the employments for the day. When he goes out, he sticks a pin opposite the piece of business which has called him away, so that, should any one call and find him not within, he can know at once, by consulting the card, how the father is occupied, and whether he is accessible at that particular time. Among the items of business which usually appear on the card, "conference" is now one of very frequent occurrence, which indicates no inconsiderable amount of business, having reference to foreign parts, at present on the hands of the order.

[Pg 428]

I shall suppose that the reader is passing along the Corso. Has he marked that tall thin man who has just passed him,

"Walking in beauty like the night?"

There is an air of tidiness in his dress, and of comparative cleanliness on his person. He wears a small round cap, with three corners; or, if a hat, one of large brim. Neither cowl nor scapular fetters his motions; a plain black gown, not unlike a frock-coat, envelopes his person. How softly his footsteps fall! You scarce hear their sound as he glides past you. His face, how unruffled! As the lake, when the winds are asleep, hides under a moveless surface, resplendent as a sheet of gold, the dark caverns at its bottom, so does this calm, impassable face the workings of the heart beneath. This man holds in his hands the threads of a conspiracy which is exploding at that moment, mayhap in China, or in the Pacific, or in Peru, or in London.

[Pg 429]

He is at Rome at present, and appears in his proper form and dress as a Jesuit. But that man can change his country, he can change his tongue, and, Proteus-like, multiply his shapes among mankind. Next year that man whom you now meet on the streets of Rome may be in Scotland in the humble guise of a pedlar, vending at once his earthly and his spiritual wares. Or he may be in England, acting as tutor in some noble family, or in the humbler capacity of body-servant to a gentleman, or, it may be, filling a pulpit in the Church of England. He may be a Protestant schoolmaster in America, a dictator in Paraguay, a travelling companion in France and Switzerland, a Liberal or a Conservative—as best suits his purpose—in Germany, a Brahmin in India, a Mandarin in China. He can be anything and everything,—a believer in every creed, and a worshipper of every god,—to serve his Church. Rome has hundreds of thousands of such men spread over all the countries of the world. With the ring of Gyges, they walk to and fro over the earth, seeing all, yet themselves unseen. They can unlock the cabinets of statesmen, and enter unobserved the closets of princes. They can take their seat in synods and assemblies, and dive into the secrets of families. Their grand work is to sow the seeds of heresies in Churches and of

dissensions in States, that, when the harvest of strife and division is fully matured, Rome may come in and reap the fruits.

CHAPTER XXIX.

[Pg 430]

SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC CUSTOMS OF THE ROMANS.^[10]

A Roman House—Wretched Dwellings of Working-Classes—How Working Men spend their Leisure Hours—Roman mode of reckoning Time—Handicrafts and Trades in Rome—Meals—Breakfast, Dinner, &c.—Games—Amusements—Marriages—Deaths and Funerals—Wills tampered with—Popular regard to Omens—Superstitions connected with the Pope's Name—Terrors of the Priesthood—Weather, and Journey Homeward.

I SHALL NOW endeavour to bring before my readers, in a short chapter, the daily inner life of Rome. First of all, let us take a peep into a Roman dwelling. The mansions of the nobility and the houses of the wealthier classes are built on the plan of the ancient Romans. There is a portal in front, a paved court in the middle, a quadrangle enclosing it, with suites of apartments running all round, tier on tier, to perhaps four or five stories. The palaces want nothing but cleanliness to make them sumptuous. They are of marble, lofty in style, and chaste though ornate in design. The pictures of the great masters that once adorned them are now scattered over northern Europe, and the frames are filled with copies. For this the poverty or extravagance of their owners is to blame. The best pictures in Rome are those in the churches, and these are sadly dimmed and obscured by the smoke of the incense. A fire-place in a Roman house is a sort of phenomenon; and yet the climate of Rome, unless at certain times, is not that balmy, intoxicating element which we imagine it to be. During my stay there, I had to encounter alternate deluges of rain, with lightning, and cutting blasts of the Tramontana. The comfort of an Italian house, especially in winter, depends more on its exposure to the sun than on any arrangement for heating it. Some few, however, have fire-places in the rooms. The kitchen is placed on the top of the house,—the very reverse of its position with us. The ends sought hereby are safety, and the convenience of discharging the culinary effluvia into the atmosphere. The fire-place is unique, and not unlike that of a smithy. There is a cap for sparks; and about three feet above the floor stands a stone sole, in which holes are cut for the *forcelli*, which are square cast-iron grated boxes for holding the wood char, upon which the culinary utensils are placed. These are but ill adapted for preparing a roast. John Bull would look with sovereign contempt, or downright despair, according to the state of his stomach, on the thing called a roast in Rome. There it is seldom seen beyond the size of a beef-steak. Much small fry is roasted with a ratchet-wheel and spit. This is wound up with a weight, and revolves over the fire, which is strewed upon the hearth.

[Pg 431]

The working classes generally purchase their meals cooked in the *Osteria Cucinante*, where food and wine are to be had. These are numerous in Rome. They may be fairly called the homes of the working classes, for there they lounge so long as their baiocchi last. The houses of the working classes are comfortless in the extreme. They are of stone, and roomy, but unfurnished. A couple of straw-bottomed chairs and a bed make up generally the entire furnishings of a Roman house. Indeed, the latter article appears to be the only reason for having a house at all. So soon as the day's labour is over, the working men resort to the wine and eating shops and coffeehouses, where they remain till the time of shutting, which is two and three hours of the night. The Roman reckoning of the day begins at Ave Maria, which is a quarter of an hour after sunset. The first hour of the night is consequently an hour after Ave Maria, from which the Romans reckon consecutively till the twenty-fourth hour. As the sun sets earlier or later, according to the season of the year, the hours vary of course, and the same period of the day that is indicated by the twelfth hour at the time of equinox, is indicated by the eleventh hour in midsummer, and the thirteenth hour in midwinter. This is very annoying to travellers from the north of Europe. "What o'clock is it?" you ask; and are told in reply, "It is the eighteenth hour and three quarters." To find the time of day from this answer, you must calculate from Ave Maria, with reference to the time of sunset at that particular season of the year. Mid-day is announced in Rome by the firing of a cannon from the castle of St Angelo. The French reckon time as we do, and may possibly, before they leave Rome, teach the Romans to adopt the same mode of reckoning.

[Pg 432]

When I stated in a former chapter that trade there is not in Rome, my readers, of course, understood me to mean that it was comparatively annihilated, not totally extinguished. The Romans must have houses, however poor; clothes, however homely; and food, however plain; and the supply of these wants necessitates the existence, to a certain extent, of the various trades and handicrafts. But in Rome these exist in an embryotic state, and are carried on after the most antiquated modes,—much as in Britain five hundred years ago. The principal public works,—for by this name must we dignify the little quiet concerns in the Eternal City,—are situated in the neighbourhood of Trastevere, the decidedly plebeian quarter of Rome, although it would not do to say so to a Trasteverian. There are woollen manufactories and candle manufactories. The chief customer of the latter is the Church. The armoury and mint are contiguously situated to St Peter's. The tanning of hides is extensively carried on along the banks of the Tiber, whose classic

[Pg 433]

"gold" is not unfrequently streaked with oozy streams of a dirty white. Flour-mills are numerous. Amid the brawls which disturb the Trastevere, the ear can catch the ring of the shuttle, for there a few hand-loom weavers pursue their calling. There is a tobacco manufactory in the same quarter; and I must state, for truth compels me, that most of the Roman women take snuff. From the windows of the Vatican Museum one can see the tile and brick maker busy at his trade behind the palace. Extensive potteries exist near to Ripa Grande, where the most of the kitchen and chamber utensils for city and country are made. I may here note, that most of the cooking utensils of the working man are of earthenware, and stand the fire remarkably well.

There are about a score of soap-works in Rome, but the soap manufactured in these establishments is abominable. My friend Mr Stewart informed me that he brought a soap-boiler from Glasgow, who understood his business thoroughly, and had soap made in Rome as we have it in this country, but without the palm-oil. This ingredient was not used, because, not being in the tariff, it was thought that, should it be imported, it would in all probability be classed under "perfumeries," and charged an exorbitant duty. The soap being a new thing in Rome, and unlike the nauseous stuff there in use, a clamour was raised against it, to the effect that it produced sickness, and caused headache and vomiting. The Roman ladies, in certain circumstances, are most fastidious about smells, though why they should in Rome, of all places in Europe, is most unaccountable. The Government, compassionating their sufferings, seized a parcel of the soap, and caused it to be analyzed by a chemist. The chemist's report was not unfavourable; nevertheless, owing to the strong prejudice against the article, the sale was so limited, that its manufacture had to be discontinued as unremunerative. Besides the trades already enumerated, there are in the Eternal City marble-cutters, mosaics and cameo workers, sculptors and painters, vine-dressers, olive-dressers, vegetable cultivators, silk-worm rearers, and a few manufacturers of silk scarfs. There are, too, in a feeble state, the trades connected with the making and mending of clothes, the building and repairing of houses. And to feel how feeble these trades are, it is only necessary to see the garments of the Romans, how coarse in material and how uncourtly in cut. The peasant throws a sheep's skin over him, and is clad; the lower classes of the towns look as if they fabricated their own garments, from the spinning upwards. To the best of my knowledge, there was only one house being built in all Rome when I was there; and that was rising on an old foundation near the Capitol. The makers of votive offerings and wax-candles for the saints are a more numerous class than the masons in Rome. Washer-women form a numerous body, as do lodging-house keepers,—a class that includes many of the nobles. The clerks are numberless, and very ill paid, having in many cases to attend two or three employers to eke out a living. Men are invariably employed as house-servants in Rome. They cook, clean the chambers, make up the beds, in short, do everything that is necessary to be done in a house.

[Pg 434]

[Pg 435]

The workman begins his day's labour at six or seven, as the season of the year may be. He breakfasts on coffee, or on coffee and milk in equal proportions, or on warm milk alone. Bread is used, which he soaks in his tumbler of coffee. Few take butter; fewer still eggs or ham, for pecuniary reasons. Many of the working classes take soup of bread paste; others take salad and olive-oil with bread. The peasantry cut up their coarse bread, saturate it with olive-oil, dust it over with pepper, and eat it along with *finocchio* (fennel), the vegetable being unboiled. Roasted or boiled chestnuts are extensively used at all times of the day. They are to be had on the streets; many making a living by roasting and selling these fruits.

Mid-day is the common dining hour. The meal generally consists of soup of bread, herbs, paste, or macaroni, butcher-meat, fowls, snails (white, fed on grass), frogs, entrails of fowls and young birds, omelettes, sausages, salad with olive-oil, dried olives, fruit, and wine, according to the circumstances of the person. The country people during harvest make their dinner of coarse bread, to which they add a few cloves of garlic, a little goat's-milk cheese, and sour wine diluted with water. Many live on bread alone, with wine. Supper is generally a substantial meal, consisting more or less of the same materials as are used for dinner, salad and wine never failing. Tomatoes are extensively used, ate alone, or serving for all kinds of dinner and supper stews. Green figs are much used. Polenda is a universal article of food amongst the peasantry. It is Indian corn ground and boiled, and made to take the place that *porridge* does in Scotland, with this difference, that it is boiled in pork fat.

[Pg 436]

The amusements of the working classes are not numerous. Moro and the bowls are their two principal games. The first is generally played at in twos, and is not unlike our schoolboy game of *odds* or *evens*. The Romans, at this game, however, put themselves into the attitude of gladiators,—each naming a number, and extending at the same time so many fingers; and the party that names the number corresponding with the number of fingers extended by both is the victor. So many *guesses* constitute the game. The attitude and airs of the combatants in this simple game,—which seems fitter for children than for men,—are very ridiculous. The other chief amusement of the Romans is bowls. These are made of wood. So many hands are ranged on this side, and an equal number on that; and the game proceeds more or less after the fashion of curling. The feast days,—which are numerous in Rome,—on which labour is interdicted under a heavy penalty, are mostly passed at bowls; as the Sabbaths, on which labour is also forbidden, though under a much smaller penalty, are generally with the drawing of the lottery. All places of rendezvous beyond the walls have the sign of the balls, along with the accompanying intimation, *Vino, Bianco e Rosso*. Encircling the courtyard adjoining the house is a broad straw-shed or canopy, beneath

which the crowd assembles, young and old, male and female, gathering round small tables, and discussing the *fiasci* of Orvieto and toast. The game is proceeding all the while in their neighbourhood, the stakes being so many more flasks of the choice wine of Orvieto. This continues till Ave Maria, when the crowd break up, withdraw to the city, and, after a visit to the wine-shops within the walls, go home, and (as I was naïvely told by a Scotch lady resident in Rome) beat their wives as much as they do in England.

[Pg 437]

In the coffeehouses the grand sources of amusement are dice and drafts, along with backgammon and billiards. The latter two games are confined to the upper and middle classes. Most of the upper classes, I believe, have billiard-rooms at home, for family use and conversazione-party amusement. In the absence of newspapers, journals, and books, it would be impossible, without these expedients, to get through the evening. All who can afford to attend the theatre (more properly opera), do so as regularly as the night comes; and the scenes and acts which they there witness form the basis of Italian conversation. It is at least a safe subject. No Roman who has the fear of a prison before him would discuss politics in a mixed company. In Rome there is an utter dearth of employment for young men. They dare not travel; they cannot visit a neighbouring town without the permission of Government, which is only sometimes to be had; they have nothing to read; and one can imagine, in these circumstances, the utter waste of mental and moral energies which must ensue among this class in Rome. These young men have a sore battle to keep up appearances. They do their utmost absolutely for a cigar and cane; but their success is not always such as so great ingenuity and patience deserve. You may see them in half-dozens, lounging for hours about the coffeehouses, without, in many cases, spending more than a single baiocchi on coffee, and sometimes not even that.

Marriage is negotiated, not by the young persons, but by the parents. The mother charges herself with everything appertaining to the making of the match, conducting even the correspondence. Of course, to address a billet doux to the young lady would be to infringe upon the prerogatives of mamma, which must ever be held inviolate if success is seriously aimed at. The mother receives all such epistles, and answers them in the daughter's behalf. The young lady is closely watched, and is never left a moment in the society of her intended partner previous to marriage, unless in the presence of a third party. The Romans thus marry by sight, and have no means, so far at least as regards personal intercourse, of ascertaining the dispositions, tastes, intelligence, and habits of each other. After marriage the lady is free. She may visit and receive visitors; and has now an opportunity for like and dislike; and may be tempted possibly to use it all the more that she had no such opportunity before.

[Pg 438]

From marriages I pass to deaths and funerals. The usages customary on the last illness of a Roman I cannot better describe than by referring to a case which my friend Mr Stewart had occasion to witness. It was that of a clerk in the Roman savings bank, an acquaintance of his, and a young man of some means. In 1846 he caught fever, and, after lingering for three weeks, died. Relatives he had none; and my friend never met any one with the patient save the priest, whose duty it was to administer the last sacrament, and to do so in time. The sick man's chamber was curiously arranged. On the bed-cover were laid three crucifixes: one was four feet in length; the other two were of smaller size. This safeguard against the demons was further reinforced by the addition of a palm-branch, and a few trifling pictures of the Virgin and saints. On the wall, above the bed, hung a frame, containing a picture of the Virgin Mary, executed in the ordinary style, with lighted candles beside it. Two were placed on each side, and to these was added *una mazza di fiori*. Notwithstanding all this he died. The body was then carried to church for the last services, preparatory to consignment to the burying-ground of Saint Lorenzo. A single word pointing to that blood that cleanseth from all sin would have been of more avail than all this idle array; but that word was not spoken.

[Pg 439]

Towards the close of life, especially if the person be wealthy, the priests and monks grow very assiduous in their attentions, and the relatives become in proportion uneasy. I was introduced at Rome to a Signor Bondini, who had a wealthy relative in the *Regno di Napoli*, on the verge of eighty, and very infirm. There was a monastery in his immediate neighbourhood, and the monks of that establishment were in daily attendance upon him. His friends in Rome felt much anxiety regarding the disposal of his property. How the matter ended I know not; but I trust, for the sake of my acquaintance, that all went well. Nor do friends feel quite safe even after the "will" has been ratified by the testator's death. There is a tribunal, as I have formerly stated, for revising wills,—the S. Visita,—which assumes large powers. Of this a curious instance occurred recently. A Signor Galli, cousin of the minister of that name already mentioned, died in the July of 1854, and left his whole property, amounting to about fifty thousand pounds, to neither relatives nor priests, but to works of benevolence for the relief of the poor. The trustee under the deed was proceeding to plan a workhouse or an asylum for infirm old men, when the Chapter of St Peter's claimed the money, on the ground that, as the works of benevolence were not specified in the will, the funds were the property of St Peter's. Some hundreds of old men are employed in the repairs continually going on about that church, and the Chapter meant to spend the money in that way. Meanwhile the S. Visita put in its claim in opposition to the Chapter, and awarded the property for masses for the soul of the departed; deeming, doubtless, that the whole would be little enough to expiate the well-known liberal opinions of the deceased. So stands the matter at present. It is impossible to say whether the money will be spent in paving the Piazza San Pietro,

[Pg 440]

or in masses; as to the relief of the poor, that is now out of the question.

It is customary for Roman families to desert the dead, that is, to leave the body in the hands of the priests and monks, who perform the necessary offices to the corpse, conduct the funeral, and sing masses for the soul of the departed. The pomp and display of the one, and the length and number of the other, are regulated entirely by the circumstances of the deceased's family. A more ghastly procession than the funeral one cannot imagine. Instead of a company of grave men, carrying with decorous sorrow to its final resting-place the body of their departed brother, you meet what you take to be a procession of ghouls. The coffin, borne shoulder-high, comes along the street, followed by a long line of figures, enveloped from head to foot in black serge gowns, with holes for the eyes. They march along, carrying large black crosses and tallow candles, and using their voices in something which is betwixt a chant and a howl. The sight suggests only the most dismal associations. But it has its uses, and that is, to move the living to be liberal in masses to rescue the soul from the power of the demons, of which no feeble representation is exhibited in this ghostly and unearthly procession.

The modern Italians pay great regard to omens; and, in the important affairs of life, are guided rather by considerations of lucky and unlucky than the maxims of wisdom. The name of the present Pope the Romans hold to be decidedly of evil omen; so much so, that to affix it anywhere is to make the person or thing a mark for calamity. And I was told a curious list of instances corroborative of this opinion. The first year of the reign of Pius was marked by an unprecedented and disastrous flood. The Tiber rose so high in Rome, that it drowned the stone lions in the Piazza del Popolo, flooded the city, and filled the Corso to a depth that compelled the citizens to have recourse to boats. The Government had a great cannon named after the Pope, which was used in the war of independence sanctioned by Pius in 1848. The cannon Pio was taken by the Austrians, although it was afterwards restored. There was a famous steamer, the property of the Papal Government, named "Pia," which plied on the Adriatic. That steamer shared the fate of all that bears the Pope's name. It was taken, too, by the Austrians, but not returned; though, for a reason I shall afterwards state, better it had been sent back. I was wandering one afternoon amid the desolate mounds outside the walls on the east, when I saw a cloud of frightful blackness gather over Rome, and several intensely vivid bolts shoot downward. When I entered the city, I found that the "Porta Pia" had been laid in ruins, and that the occurrence had revived all the former impressions of the Romans regarding the evil significancy of the Pope's name. All who came to his aid in his reforming times, they say, were smitten with disaster or sudden death. He never raises his hands to bless but down there comes a curse. I was not a little struck, in the winter following my return from Rome, to read in the newspapers, that this same steamer Pia, of which I had heard mention made in Rome as having about it a magnet of evil in the Pope's name, had gone down in the Adriatic, with all on board. It was one of the two vessels which carried the suite of the Russian Grand Dukes when they visited Venice in the winter of 1852, and, encountering a tempest on its return, perished, with some two hundred persons, consisting of crew and soldiers.

As regards the affection which the Romans bear to Pope and Papacy, I was assured by Mr Freeborn, our consul in Rome, that there is not a priest in that city who had two hours to live when the last French soldier shall have marched out at the gate. All who had resided for some time in Rome, and knew the state of feeling in the population, shuddered to think of what would certainly happen should the French be withdrawn. I have been told by those who visited Rome more recently, that the Romans now do not ask for so much as two hours. "Give us but half an hour," say they, "and we undertake that the Papacy shall never again trouble the world." No true Protestant can wish, or even hope, to put down the system in this way; nevertheless it is a fact, that the Romans have been goaded to this pitch of exasperation, and the slightest change in the political relations of Europe might precipitate on Rome and the Papal States an avalanche of vengeance. The November of 1851 was a time of almost unendurable apprehension to the priests. With reference to France, then on the eve of the *coup d'etat*, though not known to be so save in Rome,—where I am satisfied it was well known,—the priests, I was told by those who had access to know, said, "We tremble, we tremble, for we know not how we shall finish!" They were said to have their pantaloons, et cetera, all ready, to escape in a laic dress. Assuredly the curse has taken effect upon the occupants of the Vatican not less than on the inhabitants of the Ghetto. "Thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life."

Among other things that did not realize my expectations in Italy was the weather. During my stay in Rome there were dull and dispiriting days, with the Alban hills white to their bottom. Others were clear, with the piercingly cold Tramontana sweeping the streets; but more frequently the sirocco was blowing, accompanied with deluges of rain, and flashes of lightning that made the night luminous as the day, and peals that rocked the city on its foundations. One Sabbath evening we had a slight shock of earthquake; and I began to think that I had come to see the volcanic covering of the Campagna crack, and the old hulk which has been stranded on it so long sink into the abyss. My homeward journey was accomplished so far in the most dismal weather I have ever seen. I started from Rome on a Monday afternoon, in a Veturino carriage, with two Roman gentlemen as my companions. It was the Civita Vecchia road, for my purpose was to go by sea to France. We reached the half-way house some hours after dark; and, having supped, we were required to conform to the rule of the house, which was to retire, not to bed, but

to our vehicle, which stood drawn up on the highway, and pass the night as best we could. I awoke at day-break, and found the postilion yoking the horses in a perfect hurricane of wind and rain. We reached Civita Vecchia at breakfast-time, and found the Mediterranean one roughened expanse of breakers, with the white waves leaping over the mole, and violently rocking the vessels in the harbour. The steamers from Naples to Marseilles were a week over due, and the agents could not say when one might arrive. Time pressed; and after wandering all day about the town,—one of the most wretched on earth,—and seeing the fiery sun find his bed in the weltering ocean, I took my seat in the *diligence* for Rome.

This was the third time I had passed through that land of death the Campagna; and that night in especial I shall never forget. My companions in the *interieur* were two Dutch gentlemen, and a lady, the wife of one of them. The rain fell in deluges; the frequent gleams showed us each other's faces; and the bellowing thunder completely drowned the rattle of our vehicle. The long weary night wore through, and about four of the morning we came to the old gate. My passport had been viséd with reference to a sea-voyage; and to explain my change of route to the officials in Civita Vecchia and at the gate of Rome, and persuade them to make the corresponding alterations, cost me some little trouble, and a good many paulos into the bargain. I succeeded, fortunately, for otherwise I should have had to submit to a detention of several days. How to make the homeward journey had now become a serious question. The weather had made the sea unnavigable; and the Alps, now covered to a great depth with ice and snow, could be crossed only on sledges. I resolved on going by land to Leghorn,—a wearisome and expensive route, but one that would show me the old Etruria, with several cities of note in Italian history. The *diligence* for Florence was to start in an hour. I hurried to the office, and engaged the only seat that remained unbespoke, in the coupé happily, with a Russian and Italian gentleman as companions. I made my final exit by the Flaminian gate; and as I crossed the swollen Tiber, and began to climb the height beyond, the first rays of the morning sun were slanting across the Campagna, and tinging with angry light the troubled masses of cloud that hung above the many-domed city.

[Pg 444]

For a few hours the ride was pleasant. All around lay the neglected land, thinly besprinkled with forlorn olives, but without signs of man, save where a crumbling village might be seen crowning the summit of the little conical hills that form so striking a feature in the Etrurian landscape. When we had reached the spurs of the Apennines the storm fell. The air was thickened with alternate showers of sleet and snow. We had to encounter torrents in the valleys, and drifted wreaths on the heights; in short, the journey was to the full as dreary as one through the Grampians would have been at the same season. There was little to tempt us to leave our vehicle at the few villages and towns where we halted, for they seemed half-drowned in rain and mud. Late in the afternoon we reached Viterbo, and stopped to eat a wretched dinner. We found in the hotel but little of that abundance of which the magnificent vine-stocks in the adjoining fields gave so goodly promise. Starting again at dusk, the ladies of the party inquired where the patrol was that used to accompany travellers through the brigand-haunted country of Radicofani, on which we were about to enter; but could get no satisfactory answer. We skirted the lake of Bolsena, with its rich but deserted shores, and its fine mountains of oak. Soon thereafter darkness hid from us the country; but the frequent gleams of lightning showed that it was wild and desolate as ever traveller passed through. It was naked, and torn, and scathed, as if fire had acted upon it, which, indeed, it had, for our way now lay amidst extinct volcanoes. Towards midnight the *diligence* suddenly stopped. "Here are the brigands at last," said I to myself. I jumped out; and, stretched on the road, pallid and motionless, lay the foremost postilion. Had he been shot, or what had happened? He was a raw-boned lad of some eighteen, wretchedly clad, and worse fed; and he had swooned through fatigue and cold. We brought him round with a little brandy; and, setting him again on his nags, we continued our journey.

[Pg 445]

I recollect of awaking at times from troubled sleep, to find that we were zig-zagging up the sides of mountains tall and precipitous as a sugar-loaf, and entering beneath the portals of towns old and crumbling, perched upon their very summit. A more desolate sight than that which met the eye when day broke I never saw. Every particle of soil seemed torn from the face of the country; and, as far as the eye could reach, plain and hill-side lay under a covering of marl, which was grooved and furrowed by torrents. "Is this Italy?" I asked myself in astonishment. As the day rose, both weather and scenery improved. Towards mid-day, the green beauteous mount on which Sienna, with its white buildings and its cathedral towers, is situated, rose in the far distance; and, after many hours winding and climbing, we entered its walls.

[Pg 446]

At Sienna we exchanged the *diligence* for the railway, the course of which lay through a series of ravines and valleys of the most magnificent description, and thoroughly Tuscan in their character. We had torrents below, crags crowned with castles above, vines, chestnuts, and noble oaks clothing the steep, and purple shadows, such as Italy only can show, enrobing all. I reached Pisa late in the evening; and there a substantial supper, followed by yet more grateful sleep, made amends for the four previous days' fasting, sleeplessness, and endurance. I passed the Sabbath at Leghorn; and, starting again on Monday *via* Marseilles, and prosecuting my journey day and night without intermission, save for an hour at a time, came on Saturday evening to the capital of happy England, where I rested on the morrow, "according to the commandment."

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE WHOLE, OR, ROME HER OWN WITNESS.

WHEN one goes to Rome, it is not unreasonable that he should there look for some proofs of the vaunted excellence of the Roman faith. Rome is the seat of Christ's Vicar, and the centre of Christianity, as Romanists maintain; and there surely, if anywhere, may he expect to find those personal and social virtues which have ever flourished in the wake of Christianity. To what region has she gone where barbarism and vice have not disappeared? and in what age has she flourished in which she has not moulded the hearts of men and the institutions of society into conformity with the purity of her own precepts, and the benevolence of her own spirit? She has been no teacher of villany and cruelty,—no patron of lust,—no champion of oppression. She has known only "whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." Her great Founder demanded that she should be tried by her fruits; and why should Rome be unwilling to submit to this test? If the Pope be Christ's Vicar, his deeds cannot be evil. If Romanism be Christianity, or rather, if it alone be Christianity, as its champions maintain, Rome must be the most Christian city on the earth, and the Romans examples to the whole human race, of industry, of sobriety, of the love of truth, and, in short, of whatever tends to dignify and exalt human character. On the assumption that the Christianity of the Seven Hills is the Christianity of the New Testament, Rome ought to be the seat of just laws, of inflexibly upright and impartial tribunals, and of wise, paternal, and incorruptible rulers. Is it so? Is Christ's Vicar a model to all governors? and is the region over which he bears sway renowned throughout the earth as the most virtuous, the most happy, and the most prosperous region in it? Alas! the very opposite of all this is the fact. There is not on the face of the earth a region more barren of everything Christian, and of everything that ought to spring from Christianity, than is the region of the Seven Hills. And not only do we there find the absence of all that reminds us of Christianity, or that could indicate her presence; but we find there the presence, on a most gigantic scale, and in most intense activity, of all the elements and forms of evil. When the infidel would select the very strongest proofs that Christianity cannot possibly be Divine, and that its influence on individual and national character is most disastrous, he goes to the banks of the Tiber. The weapons which Voltaire and his compeers wielded with such terrible effect in the end of last century were borrowed from Rome. Now, why is this? Either Christianity is to a most extraordinary degree destructive of all the temporal interests of man, or Romanism is not Christianity.

[Pg 448]

The first part of the alternative cannot in reason be maintained. Christianity, like man, was made in the image of Him who created her; and, like her great Maker, is essentially and supremely benevolent. She is as much the fountain of good as the sun is the fountain of light; and the good that is in the minor institutions which exist around her comes from her, just as the mild effulgence of the planets radiates from the great orb of day. She cherishes man in all the extent of his diversified faculties, and throughout the vast range of his interests, temporal and eternal. But Romanism is as universal in her evil as Christianity is in her good. She is as omnipotent to overthrow as Christianity is to build up. Man, in his intellectual powers and his moral affections,—in his social relations and his national interests,—she converts into a wreck; and where Christianity creates an angel, Romanism produces a fiend. Accordingly, the region where Romanism has fixed its seat is a mighty and appalling ruin. Like some Indian divinity seated amidst the blood, and skulls, and mangled limbs of its victims, Romanism is grimly seated amidst the mangled remains of liberty, and civilization, and humanity. Her throne is a graveyard,—a graveyard that covers, not the mortal bodies of men, but the fruits and acquisitions, alas! of man's immortal genius. Thither have gone down the labours, the achievements, the hopes, of innumerable ages; and in this gulph they have all perished. Italy, glorious once with the light of intelligence and of liberty on her brow, and crowned with the laurel of conquest, is now naked and manacled. Who converted Italy into a barbarian and a slave? The Papacy. The growth of that foul superstition and the decay of the country have gone on by equal stages. In the territory blessed with the pontifical government there is—as the previous chapters show—no trade, no industry, no justice, no patriotism; there is neither personal worth nor public virtue; there is nothing but corruption and ruin. In fine, the Papal States are a physical, social, political, and moral wreck; and from whatever quarter that *religion* has come which has created this wreck, it is undeniable that it has not come from the New Testament. If it be true that "a tree is known by its fruits," the tree of Romanism was never planted by the Saviour.

[Pg 449]

[Pg 450]

With such evidence before him as Italy furnishes, can any man doubt what the consequence would be of admitting this system into Britain? If there be any truth in the maxim, that like causes produce like effects, the consequences are as manifest as they are inevitable. There is a force of genius, a versatility and buoyancy, about the Italians, which fit them better than most to resist longer and surmount sooner the influence of a system like the Papacy; and yet, if that system has wrought such terrible havoc among them,—if it has put them down and keeps them down,—where is the nation or people who may think to embrace Romanism, and yet escape being destroyed by it? Assuredly, should it ever gain the ascendancy in this country, it will inflict, and in far shorter time, the same dire ruin upon us which it has inflicted on Italy.

Let no man delude himself with the idea that it is simply a *religion* which he is admitting, and

that the only change that would ensue would be merely the substitution of a Romanist for a Protestant creed. It is a *scheme of Government*; and its introduction would be followed by a complete and universal change in the political constitution and government of the country. The Romanists themselves have put this matter beyond dispute. Why did the Papists divide *territorially* the country? Why did they assume *territorial* titles? and why do they so pertinaciously cling to these titles? Why, because their chief aim is to erect a territorial and political system, and they wish to secure, by fair means or foul, a pretext or basis on which they may afterwards enforce that system by political and physical means. Have we forgotten the famous declaration of Wiseman, that his grand end in the papal aggression was to introduce canon law? And what is canon law? The previous chapters show what canon law is. It is a code which, though founded on a religious dogma, namely, that the Pope is God's Vicar, is nevertheless mainly temporal in its character. It claims a temporal jurisdiction; it employs temporal power in its support,—the *sbirri*, Swiss guards, and French troops at Rome, for instance; and it visits offences with temporal punishment,—banishment, the galleys, the carabine, and guillotine. In its most modified form, and as viewed under the glosses of the most dexterous of its modern commentators and apologists, it vests the Pope in a DIRECTING POWER, according to which he can declare *null* all constitutions, laws, tribunals, decisions, oaths, and causes contrary to good morals, in other words, contrary to the interests of the Church, of which he is the sole and infallible judge; and all resistance is punishable by deprivation of civil rights, by confiscation of goods, by imprisonment, and, in the last resort, by death. In short, it vests in the Pope's hands all power on earth, whether spiritual or temporal, and puts all persons, ecclesiastical and secular, under his foot. A more overwhelming tyranny it is impossible to imagine; for it is a tyranny that unites the voice with the arm of Deity. We challenge the Romanist to show how he can inaugurate his system in Britain,—set up canon law, as he proposes,—without changing the constitution of the country. We affirm, on the grounds we have stated, that he cannot. This, then, is no battle merely of churches and creeds; it is a battle between two kingdoms and two kings,—the Pope on one side, and Queen Victoria on the other; and no one can become an abettor of the pontiff without being thereby a traitor to the sovereign.

[Pg 451]

And with the fall of our religion and liberty will come all the demoralizing and pauperizing effects which have followed the Papacy in Italy. Mind will be systematically cramped and crushed; and everything that could stimulate thought, or inspire a love for independence, or recall the memory of a former liberty, will be proscribed. We cannot have the Papacy and open tribunals. We cannot have the Papacy and free trade: our factories will be closed, as well as our schools and churches; our forges silenced, as well as our printing presses. Motion even will be forbidden; or, should our railways be spared, they will convey, in lack of merchandise, bulls, palls, dead men's bones, and other such precious stuff. Our electric telegraph will be used for the pious purpose of transmitting absolutions and pardons, and our express trains for carrying the host to some dying penitent. The passport system will very speedily cure our people of their propensity to travel; and, instead of gadding about, and learning things which they ought not, they will be told to stay at home and count their beads. The *Index* will effectually purge our libraries, and give us but tens where we have now thousands. Alas for the great masters of British literature and song! The censorship will make fine work with our periodic literature, pruning the exuberance and taming the boldness of many a now free pen. Our clubs, from Parliament downwards, will have their labours diminished, by having their sphere contracted to matters only on which the Church has not spoken; and our thinkers will be taught to think aright, by being taught not to think at all. We must contract a liking for consecrated wafers and holy water; and provide a confessor for ourselves, our wives, and daughters. We must eat only fish on Friday, and keep the Church's holidays, however we may spend the Sabbath. We must vote at the bidding of the priest; and, above all, take ghostly direction as regards our last will and testament. The Papacy will overhaul all our political rights, all our social privileges, all our domestic and private affairs; and will alter or abrogate as it may find it for our and the Church's good. In short, it will dig a grave, in which to bury all our privileges and rights together, rolling to that grave's mouth the great stone of Infallibility.

[Pg 452]

[Pg 453]

Nor let us commit the error of under-estimating the foe, or of thinking, in an age when intelligence and liberty are so diffused, that it is impossible that we can be overcome by such a system as the Papacy. We have not, like the early Christians, to oppose a rude, unwieldy, and gross paganism; we are called to confront an idolatry, subtle, refined, perfected. We encounter error wielding the artillery of truth. We wrestle with the powers of darkness clothed in the armour of light. We are called to combat the instincts of the wolf and tiger in the form of the messenger of peace,—the Satanic principle in the angelic costume. Have we considered the infinite degradation of defeat? Have we thought of the prison-house where we will be compelled to grind for our conqueror's sport,—the chains and stakes which await ourselves and our posterity? And, even should our lives be spared, they will be spared to what?—to see freedom banished, knowledge extinguished, science put under anathema, the world rolled backwards, and the universe become a vast whispering gallery, to re-echo only the accents of papal blasphemy.

This atrocious and perfidious system is at this hour triumphant on the Continent of Europe. Britain only stands erect. How long she may do so is known only to God; but of this I am assured, that if we shall be able to keep our own, it will be, not by entering into any compromise, but by assuming an attitude of determined defiance to the papal system. There must be no truckling to

foreign despots and foreign priests: the bold Protestant policy of the country must be maintained. In this way alone can we escape the immense hazards which at present threaten us. And what a warning do the nations of the Continent hold out to us! They teach how easily liberty may be lost, but how infinite the sacrifices it takes to recover it. A moment's weakness may cost an age of suffering. If we let go the liberty we at present enjoy, none of us will live to see it regained. Look at the past history of the Papacy, and mark how it has retained its vulpine instincts in every age, and transmitted from father to son, and from generation to generation, its inextinguishable hatred of man and of man's liberties. Look at it in the Low Countries, and see it overwhelming them under an inundation of armies and scaffolds. Look at it in Spain, and see it extinguishing, amid the fires of innumerable *autos da fe*, the genius, the chivalry, and the power of that great nation. Look at it in France, whose history it has converted into an ever-recurring cycle of revolutions, massacres, and tyrannies. Look at it in the blood-written annals of the Waldensian valleys, against which it launched crusade after crusade, ravaging their soil with fire and sword, and ceasing its rage only when nothing remained but the crimson stains of its fearful cruelty. And now, after creating this wide wreck,—after glutting the axe,—after flooding the scaffold, and deluging the earth itself with human blood,—it turns to you, ye men of England and Scotland! It menaces you across the narrow channel that divides your country from the Continent, and dares to set its foul print on your free shore! Will you permit it? Will you tamely sit still till it has put its foot on your neck, and its fetter on your arm? Oh! if you do, the Bruce who conquered at Bannockburn will disown you! The Knox who achieved a yet more glorious victory will disown you! Cranmer, and all the martyrs whose blood cries to heaven against it, while their happy spirits look down from their thrones of light to watch the part you are prepared to play in this great struggle, will disown you! Your children yet unborn, whose faith you will thus surrender, and whose liberty you will thus betray, will curse your very names. But I know you will not. You are men, and will die as men, if die you must, nobly fighting for your faith and your liberties. You will not wait till you are drawn out and slaughtered as sheep, as you assuredly will be if you permit this system to become dominant. But if you are prepared to die, rather than to live the slaves of a detestable and ferocious tyranny like this, I know that you shall not die; for I firmly believe, from the aspects of Providence, and the revelations of the Divine Word, that, menacing as the Papacy at present looks, its grave is dug, and that even now it totters on the brink of that burning abyss into which it is destined to be cast; and if we do but unite, and strike a blow worthy of our cause, we shall achieve our liberties, and not only these, but the liberties of nations that stretch their arms in chains to us, under God their last hope, and the liberties of generations unborn, who shall arise and call us blessed.

THE END.

EDINBURGH: PRINTED BY MILLER AND FAIRLY.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] See the Antiquity of the Waldenses treated of at length in Leger's "Histoire de l'Eglise Vaudoise;" and Dr Gilly's "Waldensian Researches."
- [2] The author would soften his strictures on this head by a reference to the truly interesting volume on the "Ladies of the Reformation," by his talented friend the Rev. James Anderson.
- [3] I have before me a list of prices current (Prezzo Corrente Legale de generi venduti nella piazza di Roma dal di 28 Febbraro al di 5 Marzo 1852), from which it appears, that sculpture, paintings, tallow, bones, skins, rags, and pozzolano, comprise all the exports from the Papal States. What a beggarly list, compared with the natural riches of the country! In fact, vessels return oftener *without* than *with* lading from that shore.
- [4] It was so when the author was in Rome. The enterprising company of Fox & Henderson have since succeeded in overcoming the pontifical scruples, and bringing gas into the Eternal City; Cardinal Antonelli remarking, that he would accept of *their* light in return for the light *he* had sent to England.
- [5] As illustrative of our subject, we may here quote what Mr Whiteside, M.P., in his interesting volumes, "Italy in the Nineteenth Century," says of the estimation in which all concerned with the administration of justice are held at Rome:—

"The profession of the law is considered by the higher classes to be a base pursuit: no man of family would degrade himself by engaging in it. A younger son of the poorest noble would famish rather than earn his livelihood in an employment considered vile. The advocate is seldom if ever admitted into high society in Rome; nor can the princes (so called) or nobles comprehend the position of a barrister in England. They would as soon permit a *facchino* as an advocate to enter their palaces; and they have been known to ask with disdain (when accidentally apprised that a younger son of an English

nobleman had embraced the profession of the law), what could induce his family to suffer the degradation? Priests, bishops, and cardinals, the poor nobles or their impoverished descendants, will become,—advocates or judges, never. The solution of this apparent inconsistency is to be found in the fact, that in most despotic countries the profession of the law is contemptible. In Rome it is particularly so, because no person places confidence in the administration of the law, the salaries of the judges are small, the remuneration of the advocate miserable, and all the great offices grasped by the ecclesiastics. Pure justice not existing, everybody concerned in the administration of what is substituted for it is despised, often most unjustly, as being a participator in the imposture."

[6] See book vii., chap. x.

[7] Monsignor Marini, who was head of the police under Gregory XVI., and the infamous tool in all the arrests and cruelties of Lambruschini, was made a cardinal by the present Pope. All Rome said, let the next cardinal be the public executioner. Talent, certainly, has fair play at Rome, when a policeman, and even the hangman, may aspire to the chair of Peter.

[8] WHAT THE ROMAN RELIGION COSTS.

The following statistics of the wealth of the clergy in the Roman States are taken from the American *Crusader*:—

"The clergy in the Roman States realize from the funds a clear income of two millions two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. From the cattle they have another income of one hundred thousand dollars; from the canons, three hundred thousand dollars; from the public debt another income of one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; from the priests' individual estates, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars; from the portions assigned by law to nuns, five hundred thousand dollars; from the celebration of masses, two millions one hundred and fifty thousand dollars; from taxes on baptisms, forty-five thousand dollars; from the tax on the Sacrament of Confirmation, eighteen thousand dollars; from the celebration of marriages, twenty-five thousand dollars; from the attestations of births, nine thousand dollars; from other attestations, such as births, marriages, deaths, &c. &c., nine thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars; from funerals, six hundred thousand dollars; from the gifts to begging-orders, one million eight hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars; from the gifts for motives of benevolence or festivities, or maintenance of altars and lights, or for celebrating mass for the souls in purgatory, two hundred thousand dollars; from the tithes exacted in several parts of the Roman States according to the ancient rigour, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars; from preaching and panegyrics, according to the regular taxes, one hundred and fifty thousand dollars; from seminaries for entrance taxes and other rights belonging to the students, besides the boarding, fifteen thousand dollars; from the chancery for ecclesiastical provisions, for matrimonial licenses, for sanatives, &c. &c., fifty thousand dollars; from benedictions during Easter, thirty thousand dollars; from offerings to the miraculous images of Virgin Marys and Saints, seventy-five thousand dollars; from *triduums* for the sick, or for prayers, five hundred thousand dollars; from benedictions to fields, cattle, nuptial-beds, &c. &c., nine thousand dollars.

"All these incomes, which amount to *ten million five hundred and ten thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars*, are realized and enjoyed by the secular and regular clergy, composed in all of sixty thousand individuals, including nuns, without mentioning the incomes allowed them from foreign countries, for the chancery and other cosmopolite congregations.

"It is further to be observed, that in this calculation are not comprised the portions which the Romans call *passatore*, which the laity pay to the clergy; such as purchase, permutation, resignation, and ordination taxes; patents for confessions, preaching, holy oils, privileged altars, professors' chairs, and the like, which will make up another amount of a million of dollars; nor those other taxes called *pretatico*, which are paid by the Jews to the parish priest for permission to dwell without the Jews' quarter; nor those for the ringing of bells for dying persons, or those who are in agony; nor those which cripples pay for receiving in Rome the visit of the wooden child of the *celestial altar*, who must always go out in a carriage, accompanied by friars called *minori osservanti*, Franciscan friars, whose incomes they collect and govern. The value of charitable edifices (which are not registered, being exempt from all dative) is not comprised either; and the same exemption is extended to churches; although all these buildings cost the inhabitants of the State several millions of expense for provisional possession, and displays of ceremonies and feasts which are celebrated in them."

WHAT THE ROMAN RELIGION YIELDS.

A distinguished English gentleman, who has spent many years as a resident or in travelling in various papal countries in Europe, in a recent speech in London has presented some deeply interesting facts concerning vice and crime in Papal and Protestant countries. He possessed himself of the Government returns of every Romanist Government on the Continent. We have condensed and will state its results.

In England, four persons for a million, on the average, are committed for murder per year. In Ireland there are nineteen to the million. In Belgium, a Catholic country, there are eighteen murders to the million. In France there are thirty-one. Passing into Austria, we find thirty-six. In Bavaria, also Catholic, sixty-eight to the million; or, if homicides are struck out, there will be thirty. Going into Italy, where Catholic influence is the strongest

of any country on earth, and taking first the kingdom of Sardinia, we find twenty murders to the million. In the Venetian and Milanese provinces there is the enormous result of forty-five to the million. In Tuscany, forty-two, though that land is claimed as a kind of earthly paradise; and in the Papal States not less than one hundred murders for the million of people. There are ninety in Sicily; and in Naples the result is more appalling still, where public documents show there are *two hundred* murders per year to the million of people!

The above facts are all drawn from the civil and criminal records of the respective countries named. Now, taking the whole of these countries together, we have seventy-five cases of murder for every million of people. In Protestant countries,—England, for example,—we have but four for every million. Aside from various other demoralizing influences of Popery, the fact now to be named beyond doubt operates with great power in cheapening human life in Catholic countries. The Protestant criminal believes he is sending his victim, if not a Christian, at once to a miserable eternity; and this awful consideration gives a terrible aspect to the crime of murder. But the Papist only sends his victim to purgatory, whence he can be rescued by the masses the priest can be hired to say for his soul; or his own bloody hand and heart will not hinder him from doing that office himself. We think the above facts in regard to vice and crime in the two great departments of Christendom worthy the most serious pondering of every friend of morality and virtue.

[9] Martinus Scriblerus says, that "the Pope's band, though the finest in the world, would not divert the English from burning his Holiness in effigy on the streets of London on a Guy Fawkes' day;" nor, I may add, the Romans from burning him in person on the streets of Rome any day, were the French away.

[10] For much of the information contained in this chapter I am indebted to my intelligent friend Mr Stewart.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PILGRIMAGE FROM THE ALPS TO THE TIBER

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid

the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of

obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.