

all things atrocious and shameless from all parts." Everything good or bad hastened to receive Rome's sanction. Eastern magicians, Jewish merchants, Greek sophists—all classes congregated in this Babylon to exercise their several callings. Besides this, it stood in the closest communication with the most distant points of the civilized world. Its proconsuls, propretors and other officers were stationed in all the provinces subject to its sway. From these outlying points, as well as from independent countries, despatches were constantly received, the bearers of which returning home never failed to bring with them an account of Rome's latest novelty. Finally it was the seat of the emperors and the stronghold of paganism. We may view it as the point from which the devil directed his operations on the world through his imperial vice-gerents. I say vice-gerents, for the manner in which those unnatural monsters, termed emperors, applied themselves to the execution of the devil's will stands unparalleled in history.

These qualifications made Rome at once the most important of all cities for facilitating the evangelizing of the world and the most difficult of conquest. When once taken, the constant coming and going of men of every clime and tongue would afford the opportunity of sending proselytes to all parts of the world. It is not to be supposed, however, that the devil was willing to relinquish his hold on pagan Rome to make room for the entrance of Christianity. He would not surrender a possession strengthened by centuries of undisputed sway without contesting its every inch.

Nothing daunted, however, at the sight of the difficulties, considering only the great good to arise to

Christianity, St. Peter attacks this nest of infamy. He who quailed before the servant of the high-priest now dares to fly in the face of personified tyranny and deified vice. He set to work, therefore, announcing the truths of the Gospel, corroborating them by stupendous miracles. He cured the sick, lame and blind, overcame Simon Magus, and refuted the sophists. On the foundation of these miracles, he established the Episcopal Chair of Rome—a Chair whose influence soon extended to the very household of the Cæsars—a Throne which in a short time counted its subjects in every part of the known world.

But after a throne is established, vigilance may not be put aside. Far greater difficulties are experienced in the preservation of a matter of this kind than were met in its acquisition. *Then*, it was open, honest warfare; *now*, the incumbent must be ever on the alert to frustrate all the insidious designs of his worsted rival; moreover, his present exalted condition makes him the object of the envy of heretofore disinterested parties; and finally, he must always be prepared to meet the worst of all enemies—domestic strife.

This is true also of St. Peter's Throne. The devil, though defeated, did all in his power to check the ever-growing influence of the newly-founded kingdom. He fought it in person; he fought it through the sneers, slanders and calumnies of the then abounding sophists; he fought it by instigating those bloody persecutions which decimated the infant army of the Cross in the first centuries of its existence; and as in a storm the tallest tree has most to suffer, so, too, the Chair of St. Peter always felt the first blast of those storms of human