

ceremonial is still performed with much of its former pomp. As in the cathedrals on the continent, the great centre of the church is free from seats; the worshippers bring their little mats and kneel—the solemn music swells through the columned aisles, and peals back from the lofty walls—the priest dressed in vestments of great richness, chants in Latin the beautiful prayers—incense burners are moved gently backwards and forwards before the altar—and fragrance fills the air. You gaze above and around, and you see the evidences of bygone power—of bygone wealth—of bygone greatness. You gaze below, and on the monumental slabs which are beneath your feet, you read the names of generations which have passed away,—some who have filled their turn—some who have gone when young and fair, and fondly loved,—if these records speak true. Around you kneeling, bowed in reverential awe, are men and women, and youths of tender years, whose earnest suppliant looks are telling of a time that is to come—and the priest still chants—and the music swells—and you may lean against the column which supports the lofty dome, and there amid ruin, and desolation, and decay, you may calmly look upon that solemn scene, but an unconscious sadness steals upon the soul,—a sense of something that there is no permanency here, and you turn away a wiser, if not a better man.

There is something painfully depressive in these views of old religious edifices in Central and South America. Whatever persons may think of the efficacy of the system under which they were reared, at any rate there was sincerity, there was devotion. The wealth that built them, though torn from captive lands, could have contributed to the gratification of sensual pleasures, but was dedicated to a holier and a nobler end. Man in his rapine might have spared what had been rendered sacred by the cause to which it was devoted. But there seems after all to have been a retributive Justice,—an avenging Nemesis in the affairs of South and Central America. The Spaniards in their thirst for gold had in their early occupation desolated the country with blood. The wail of slaughtered nations,—the cry of trampled humanity was heard above—

“For lo! a darker hour ascends—
The altar shakes—the crozier bends—
The ire of an Almighty King
Rides forth upon destruction’s wing.”

And the descendants of those very Spaniards, and the natives whom