THE PROTECTOR
AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION: BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE."—Prov. xiv 34.

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TALK OF THE ROAD.

PETTY SESSIONS.

Well, the work began to get a little slack in Kilcommon, so Pat went home for a few days; and, of course, he went over the first evening to Jemmy Brannan to have a talk with him about what was doing.

"So tell us, Pat," said Jem, "how things is going on."

"Why, then, there's law going on," said Pat.

"And what's that about?" said Jem.

"Why, it's about stoning the readers," said Pat. "I was out one day with the cart, and I saw the greatest work at all; there was the readers first, walking as hard as they could, and you wouldn't see a bit of the color of their clothes as big as my hand, the way they were covered over with mud and slush from head to foot; and Paddy Brady, and Micky Dooly, and the Finnegans, and a set of the biggest vagabonds in Kilcommon, the fellows that used to be stealing the sheep, and that's up to all kinds of mischief, after them, pelting all the dirt they could get on them; and when the readers crossed over a piece of road that the stones were spread on the day before, and the boys came on it after them, if there wasn't a shower of stones after them, fit to wipe the mud off them! And their hats was knocked off, and their heads cut, and lumps on them as big as eggs. And then the polis comes down, and takes Paddy Brady, and Mickey Dooly, and another that was foremost, and marches them off. 'And sure,' says the boys, 'it's only defendin' our religion we are.'"

"And arn't they the pretty fellows to be defendin' their religion?" said Jem.

"Sure enough," said Pat, "I believe it's little they trouble the priest about religion. I hear tell there's not one of them has been at confession these five years; but Father John thinks them the right sort now, as you'll find."

"Well, on the Friday after, the boys were to be tried afore the bench, and it happened to be a holiday, so there was no work doing: and I seen such a crowd going to the chapel that I went there, too, to hear what Father John would say; and, sure enough, after Mass, the sermon was all about the firebrands, and the soupers, and the ranters, and the poor, innocent boys that was going to be tried, and persecuted, and exterminated, only just for trying to keep their religion from being insulted by the firebrands. So when he was tired, says he 'Now go down every one of you,' says he, 'man, woman, and child,' says he, 'and stand by the poor fellows that's going to be persecuted and swore against by the firebrands,' says he. So sure enough, when I got to the courthouse, there was a thousand people there anyway. And there was Mr. Foley, the lawyer, from Dublin, come down to defend the boys."

"And who paid for his coming?" said Jem.

"Why," said Pat, "Father John sent round his servant, and two or three of his head men, to all the Catholic shopkeepers and tradesmen in Kilcommon, and made them all subscribe their pounds, and ten shillings, and five shillings; and I heard tell they liked it little enough, but they were mostly all afraid to bring Father John's tongue on them in the chapel; only Mr. Nulty and one or two more that never cares what Father John can say. Well, the readers told their story mighty fair and clever, and then Mr. Foley got up and examined them, to make them confess they were insulting the people, and he fetched out a tract, and asked them did they give any of that; and they said they did a few; and then he read out a place where it said the priest was harassing the people for their dues. And then he made a great speech entirely to the magistrates, and said, what wonder what would happen to them, when they were insulting the people and their religion like that?"

"And did he make out they were insulting their religion any other way?" said Jem.

"No, then, he didn't," said Pat, "but he thought that the greatest insult at all."

"Well, then, I'm thinking," said Jem, "he got his story from Father John, for it's he that *would* think that the greatest insult entirely. But sure the people of Kilcommon is greatly changed this ten years back, if they think the like of that is an insult *to them*. Don't I remember, just ten years ago, when the people was fairly ris for the Priests' Tariff, as they called it, up the country? And wasn't the boys of Kilcommon just going to rise for it too, and had it all settled among them, and the day fixed, and all the boys bound to pay only the dues allowed in the Tariff for christening, and marriages, and everything else? And didn't Father John and the rest get up a great meeting for Repale, to put the boys off it, and promised to get them the country for themselves, and all kinds of things? and hadn't they fifty priests at it? and wasn't that the way the monster meetings for the Repale come about, where all the boys was expecting to get the word at last to take Ireland for themselves! And a mighty cute and clever job it was of Father John and the rest, for it put the people off the Tariff entirely.* But sure the people of Kilcommon is greatly changed if they are so easy hurt at a word agen the dues. But if Father John taught the lawyer his story, sure it's all plain enough."

"Well, that was all the insult they had any way," said Pat, "and then Mr. Owens got up, and said there was only a dozen of that tract given out, and that he stopped it when he heard Father John took offence, and never gave any more; and if anything else was insulting, he'd stop that too. And when the lawyer was done, the gentlemen said there was no law for stoning people for the like of that, and they would have to find the boys guilty, just as if they stoned anybody else. So then the lawyer asked the gentlemen only to put a fine on the boys, and whatever it was it would be paid. And while I was wondering where the like of them would get the money, I turned round, and saw Father John with his roll of bank notes out in his hand."

"Ay," said Jem, "I seen that myself, after the work at the election last summer, when Father John paid down the money in open court for every one of the boys that was fined for the work—and a bad work it was.† But did the magistrates let them off with a fine?"

"'Deed didn't they," said Pat, "this time. Old Mr. Everards says, just as quiet and easy as you plaze—'It's a month's imprisonment and labour we're going to give them,' says he. And I never seen Father John look so mad, for he wasn't going to stand *that* for the boys. Still it's a pretty good thing they made of it; for all their wives and children got new clothes, and meal, and money, and what not."

"And isn't that the dacent way for Father John to be defending his religion?" said Jem; "didn't the Rev. Mr. Owens write him a letter, asking him to settle who was right, by fair discussion, before the people? But Father John would rather get his religion defended with stones and mud, by the blackguards that never comes to confession at all; and doesn't all that show who knows that he has fair reason on his side?"

"Well, Jem," said Pat, "I am coming to think more and more that the priests hasn't reason on their side, and that they know that, once it comes to fair argument, the people will find out that. But as I was going home I fell in with Mr. Owens, and had a talk with him. 'And,' says he, 'why wouldn't we be stoned,' says he, 'when the blessed Apostles was stoned in almost every place they went to preach in?' says he, and with that he pulled out his Bible, and showed me two places where the Apostles was stoned for speaking to the people;* and another place where the Jews gathered up all 'the wicked men of the vulgar sort, and made a tumult, and set the city on an uproar,† just for all the world the way Father John does now, 'and so it's no new thing,' says he, 'but we must follow the way the blessed Apostles went.'"

"But, your reverence," says I, "what can poor men, like the likes of us, do, when the priest can get up the like of that agin any of us, and maybe put us out of our work, too? How can we stand up for the Bible at all? And with that he took out his Bible again (and it was a Douay Bible, too), and he read these words, that came harder on me than any words that ever I read in the Bible;" and Pat took out his Douay Bible and read the place (Mark viii. 38)—"'For he that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also will be ashamed of him, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with the Holy Angels.' 'And now,' says he, 'are you ashamed to stand up for the word of the Son of God, and will you make him be ashamed to stand up for you?' So I couldn't tell what to say at all, and I can't get them words out of my mind; and what will I do at all?"

So if ever we hear of what they did, we will tell it to our readers.

* Jem is quite right about this fact. We know it ourselves on good authority. The Priests' Tariff had at that time been proclaimed in many counties in Ireland, when the monster meetings turned the minds of the people in another direction.

† Jem is quite correct about this fact, too.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES IN ITALY.

Some impressions of a winter I spent on the shores of the Adriatic have been already offered to the readers of this *Journal*. Nor would any further delineations of an Italian interior have suggested themselves to my mind, had not the great events of the present moment given a fresh interest to the countries most likely eventually to be affected by them, and awakened a desire to learn more thoroughly, what is their actual condition, and determine how far Central and Southern Italy, retaining their former mode of government and institutions, can challenge a comparison with that northern state of the peninsula where progress and reform are the order of the day.

It is the prevailing impression on the continent that no part of Europe will be sooner subjected to some violent convulsion and up-rooting of all existing things than the kingdom of Naples and the papal dominions. To the reader of Italian journals, the attentive listener in Italian political circles, the evidence is unmistakeable that the tide of popular feeling is setting in anew in favour of a constitutional government; and the hope of rationally and peacefully realising the dream of 1848, of a united Italy, with Piedmont as its head, is daily gaining ground. Even among conscientious Catholics, the project of a speedy separation of the temporal from the spiritual authority of the pope, is openly discussed, and by many considered as their only safeguard from the torrent of anarchy and revolt to which the oppressions and corruptions of its rulers are hastening the country.

But of these questions, in their wide political bearings, abler pens are treating; my task is simply to complete the picture of the customs, the domestic life, the religious ceremonies, the environs of one city in the Roman States, which I have enjoyed better opportunities of studying than are generally accorded to an English traveller; and from which, depicted with the most conscientous veracity, the unprejudiced reader can form his own deductions.

Though the austerities of Lent have ceased to be observed, even in the faithful diocese of Ancona, to any very mortifying extent, the ancient rites of the church are still kept up, and towards the close of the Holy Week, the whole population becomes compulsorily devout. The parochial clergy go round to every house in their jurisdiction, taking down the names and ages of the inhabitants, and delivering to all a ticket filled up with their name, requiring them to repair, within a given period, to the parish church, for confession and communion. Any free-will offering, any spontaneous act of grace in these religious duties, is thus lost; and with the young men especially, *prender Pasqua*, as it is termed, becomes a most irksome task, which they endeavour to shuffle over, or resort to every expedient and deception to evade altogether. The government, however, is very strict in enforcing this ordinance, with the *political* view of maintaining its fast-waning influence through the confessional, going even the length of refusing pontifical subjects their passports, if they require to travel, when it can be proved that they have neglected their Easter duties; but this is an odious abuse of authority, tending to bring religion into contempt.

I remember hearing of the astonishment and indignation of some members of the V—— family—Poles by birth, but French by education—with whom we were intimate, the first year they passed in Ancona, when the priest, having taken the statistics of the household, and ascertained that they professed the Roman Catholic faith, handed to each of them in succession a printed ticket, requiring them to conform to this law. In France, they declared, they had never heard of such a measure; and they could not, even before us, forbear from expressing their disgust. It required all their mother's persuasions, and the example of her unquestioning submission to whatever emanated from priestly authority, to stifle the murmurs of the young ladies, and enforce their obedience.

On Holy Thursday, after mid-day, an unwonted silence seemed to fall upon the town, unbroken until the same hour on Saturday. No bells were tolled, no matins or vespers rung, no mass celebrated in the churches; while the streets were filled with people hastening to the *sepolcri*, or sepulchres, of which seven must be visited by the faithful. Each church has its *sepolcro*, varying in the details, but agreeing as to the general characteristics of the representation. The high-altar is divested of its usual ornaments, in token of mourning; and on the platform immediately before it, surrounded by all the emblems of the passion, is a figure in wax of life-size of the Saviour, as if just removed from the cross. All around, and on the steps leading up, are a profusion of natural flowers and tapers; and sentinels with arms reversed are stationed at intervals to keep back the crowd.

In some churches more figures are introduced—such as Joseph of Arimathea, the beloved apostle, the three Maries; others have a greater display of flowers and wax-lights, but the pervading effect in all is invariably the same. The complete stillness; the ceaseless, noiseless swaying of the crowd, as those who occupy the foremost places, after a few minutes' admiring inspection, and a few muttered prayers, quietly give room in their turn to fresh comers; the indiscriminate blending of rich and poor, as the lady in her silken robes kneels on the pavement beside the tattered beggar; the motionless forms of the Austrian soldiers in all the glittering panoply of war, surrounding the marred and blood-stained effigy of the Prince of Peace; the saturnine matter-of-fact faces of the attendant priests and sacristans, who hover about, re-lighting any taper that is accidentally extinguished, or adjusting any of the arrangements that may be displaced; the air heavy with the scent of flowers mingling with the exhalations of the vaults beneath, where moulder the remains of those who in their day have gazed upon this spectacle, for centuries repeated, for centuries unchanged: all this has struck each stranger in his turn, and is but a feeble transcript of the varied impressions it produces.

On Good Friday, there is always a procession through the principal streets of the town, which, without any of the devotional accessories of the sepolcri—the time-worn churches, the subdued light, the hushed voices—cannot fail painfully to impress the English spectator who has not been inured to sights of this description.

By the people it was eagerly looked forward to as a pleasant variety in the monotony of their lives, an opportunity of sauntering about, of looking out of the windows, of nodding to their acquaintances, and furthering some flirtation or intrigue. Any idea of investing the pageant with a religious significance seemed foreign to the minds of the great majority of the assembled throng.

When the muffled drums were heard announcing that the procession was approaching, and a detachment of troops began to line the street under our windows, I remarked a thrill of excitement, but certainly not of awe, as every head was impatiently turned in the direction from whence the torches and banners of the confraternity of the *Passionisti* first came in view. Men of all classes belonged to this *campagnia*, all similarly dressed in loose robes and cowls of gray linen, which concealed the features, a crown of thorns round the head, and a girdle of knotted cords; the difference of rank being discernible only by the whiter feet of some amongst them, and the evident pain with which they trod the sharp uneven pavement. I must, however, pause to observe here, that a bent head and hoary hair would be the general accompaniments to these marks of gentle birth, were the drapery in which they are enshrouded to be suddenly thrown aside.

Next came friars and priests, all walking according to established rule and precedence—Capuchins, Franciscans, Carmelites, Dominicans, Augustinians, carrying lighted tapers and chanting litanies. Following these were more Capuchins, to whom was especially delegated the office of carrying all the objects belonging to the crucifixion; and thus they passed on, white-bearded tottering old men, bearing successively an emblem of this day's great sacrifice, profaned by being paraded, like some mummery of old, before the idle crowd, who gazed, and sneered, and talked, indifferent to the great event thus commemorated. The crown of thorns, the purple robe, the scourge, the nails, the dice with which the soldiers had cast lots, the spear, were all carried slowly along; the sacred form itself, in the utter prostration of death, stretched upon a bier, coming next in view. A few knelt here, not one in twenty though: the rest all listless, unthinking, or unbelieving.

Some paces behind, upon a sort of platform, appeared a huge image of the Madonna, considerably above the size of life, dressed in violet robes, with long brown ringlets, and pierced through with seven daggers,—all the spiritualised beauty with which the "blessed among women," should be invested, lost in the vulgarity of this most material representation. This, with the dignitaries and magistrates of the town walking two and two, closed the procession; after which marched more soldiers, those who had been stationed along the streets falling into the ranks, and the band performing a funeral march—the same the Austrians always play after the interment of any of their comrades.

I have not exaggerated this description. To some enthusiastic poetic minds, to whom such things seem beautiful in the abstract, I know my account will prove distasteful. But thus it always is: a close insight into the countries where these time-honoured traditional ceremonies are still maintained, strips them of the mysterious charm with which, to a foreigner, they might seem to be invested, and accounts for the levity with which they are witnessed by those familiarised to them since their earliest childhood.

As another instance: there was the custom of blessing the houses on Easter Saturday, which I had heard of long before visiting Italy, and imagined must prove equally edifying and impressive. But when I saw a very dirty priest in his *alb* (I think that is the name)—a sort of linen ephod worn over the black gown—attended by a still more dirty little boy carrying holy-water, walk hastily through the house, muttering a few unintelligible words on the threshold of each room, only pausing a little longer in the kitchen to crack a few jokes with the servants, without the least semblance of devotion on his side or of reverence on theirs, and gratefully accepting a few *pauls* sent out to him by the family—why, I fell from the clouds, and my cherished illusions were dispelled. It seemed almost as hollow as blessing the horses on the 17th of January, the festival of St. Anthony, the patron of animals, which had previously greatly astonished me.

All the post and *vetturino* horses, all those belonging to private families, were taken on that day, gaily decked out with ribbons, to a square in front of one of the principal churches, where priests, standing on the steps of the portico, sprinkled them with holy-water, and pronounced a formula of benediction. A small gratuity was given for each horse, and in return the donors were presented with a little wax-taper and a small loaf of bread, by which the grooms, rather than the poor quadrupeds, were the gainers. There was a favorite cat in my uncle's establishment—a cat of great size and beauty, and of dog-like sagacity—which the servants were in vain desirous he would send to be blessed, though prompted by no other motive than the pleasure of dressing it up, and of joining in the crowd of idlers before the church.

Generally, however, it would appear as if some vague idea of averting ill-luck, of deprecating some sinister influence, must linger in the hearts of the coachmen and postilions who still adhere to this custom; which is practised by the priests—so Young Italy will tell you—solely to maintain their hold upon the superstitious fears of the lowest ranks of the populace.

But stay—I am wandering from my more immediate subject, although all the church-bells let loose, and ringing their merry peals, proclaim it is noon on Holy Saturday, and that Lent is over! There is something very heart-stirring in this rejoicing: I wish we had the same custom in England to usher in the triumphant glories of the Easter morn. Why it should be anticipated here by twelve hours, and the bells give forth their jubilee, and salvos of artillery be fired, at mid-day, instead of mid-night, I do not exactly know: I think I have somewhere read an explanation of this usage, of which I retain no clear remembrance, save that it is of very remote antiquity. Be this as it may, a few hours sooner or later are of little import; it is the pleasing impression on which I dwell, and it is one of the customs that, even with my hard matter-of-fact notions about the "good old times," I should gladly see revived amongst us.

On Easter Sunday, every one who has scraped the wherewith together, puts on new clothes, and dines on roast lamb; baskets of stained eggs are sent about as presents, and children feast on cakes embellished with the figure of the Paschal Lamb. In the week following, many marriages take place, as, except under particular circumstances, weddings are never solemnised in Lent.

Dinner-parties are also frequently given at this season amongst intimate friends; more formal ones sometimes on Easter Monday or Tuesday, by the principal families, to some great personage, the delegate or the bishop, for instance. But throughout all, whether on a social or more ceremonious footing, the same kindly feeling, the same absence of ostentation, invariably prevail. Would that we resembled the Italians in this respect! They literally follow the evangelical precept of asking to their banquets those by whom they cannot be bidden in return. At every dinner-party there are always to be met three or four old gentlemen, friends of the family, neither useful nor ornamental accessories, not distinguished by sprightliness, riches, or good looks. They would be classed as insufferable bores by us, and if asked at all, only grudgingly, to fill up a vacant place; but here, on the contrary, their age and infirmities constitute their title to admission; and unfailingly, whenever a *trattamento* is given—as any gathering for the purpose of making good cheer is denominated—are these old friends seen in their accustomed seats at the table, not the least tinge of patronage being mingled with the cordiality of their reception.

The celebration of the festivals of the Madonna, to whom the month of May is especially consecrated, and of San Ciriaco, the patron saint of Ancona, followed quickly upon those I have just now been describing; and a concourse of peasants, daily flocking in, by their bright-looking costumes, and picturesque handsome appearance, enlivened the town to a very unusual extent.

Indeed, the weather was so lovely, the air so balmy, the atmosphere so gauze-like and softening to the objects it surrounded, that an irresistible charm seemed resting upon the land; and it became easy to comprehend how a colony of Dorians, establishing themselves upon its shores, crowned its lofty promontory with a temple where Venus was invoked.

A cathedral, dedicated to San Ciriaco, one of the oldest in Europe, now occupies the site of the heathen shrine, nobly situated on the very summit of the hill, overlooking the town, which rises for some distance along its sides, but terminating about half-way, leaves the *duomo* undisturbed in its hoary majesty and impressive solitude. We used to delight in walking up here, and sitting on the steps of the portico, of which the columns were supported on two colossal lions of red granite, gaze forth on the grand prospect which this position displays. At our feet, sloping downwards in a semicircle, lay the town, the mole with Trajan's celebrated arch, the harbor and shipping, commanded by the citadel, and background of mountains stretching far along the curve of the coast, with higher ranges more dimly seen, forming part of the great chain of Appenines by which Italy is intersected. Turning away from this, you seem transported to a different region, for on three sides of this bold headland, a broad expanse of waters alone meets the view. The walls of the cathedral are not six paces removed from where the cliff abruptly ends, presenting a rugged face of rock, which towers some two or three hundred feet perpendicularly above the sea. The wild music of the waves, on a stormy day, as they struggle against its base, is borne upward by the wind, and distinguishable amid the strains of the organ and the voices of the choir, produce an effect not easily forgotten. Unfortunately, the existence of this venerable pile is threatened by the inroads of the sea, which slowly, but perceptibly, is undermining the cliff; and in a hundred years, it is calculated, the duomo will be in ruins. The votaries of San Ciriaco say, however, that he will not fail to protect his church, and defy the ravages of the elements.

The body of the saint, clad in his episcopal robes, for he was bishop of Ancona, is preserved in a subterranean chapel, and is annually exposed, for the first eight days of the month of May, to the veneration of the people.

The legend runs, that after undergoing in the east the martyrdom of boiling lead being poured down his throat, his remains floated in a stone coffin back to the scene of his former labours.

In the duomo is also kept the famous picture of the Madonna, attested to have opened her eyes in 1795, at a moment of great peril to the state, which was overrun by the armies of the French Republic. Fifty years after, in 1845, this miracle received the confirmation of the papal authority; and the petitions from the *gonfaloniere* (mayor) and magistrates, the clergy and the nobility, imploring that, "as an acknowledgment of being thus privileged, they might be permitted to place Ancona under the immediate protection of the Madonna, who, by opening the eyes of her venerated image, had signally shewn her favor towards it," received a gracious response. Fireworks, processions, a general illumination, and nine days of religious ceremonies at the duomo, inaugurated this event, which at every succeeding anniversary is still commemorated with great solemnity.

It was my good-fortune to hear a course of sermons delivered in honour of the holy image by a Barnabite friar, Padre G—— of Bologna, one of the most celebrated preachers of the day; and the scene presented by the illuminated church, the enthroned picture—a meek and lowly face, shaded by a dark-blue mantle, but resplendent with a star and rose of brilliants, with which it had been adorned by Pius VII.—the eager upturned countenances of the crowd, as their kindling glances wandered from the impassioned orator to the half-closed eyes of the motionless effigy he was apostrophizing, as if seeking to discern some miraculous manifestation in their favor; the enthusiastic appeals, the fervent action of the priest as his lofty form towered in the pulpit, and his powerful voice swelled like on organ through the aisles—all rise vividly before me, resembling some dream of enchantment, with that strange fascination that such pageants in Italy possess.

Not less remarkable than his startling eloquence was the ingenuity with which the preacher diversified nine consecutive days of discourses upon the same topic. One day he surprised his auditors by a dissertation on the invention of gunpowder, the destructive missiles employed in modern warfare, the disastrous sieges and the fearful loss of life, all attributable to this discovery. Then depicting the horrors of two or three well-known bombardments and pillages with thrilling power, he asked triumphantly whence it was that Ancona, often surrounded by hostile armies, and invested by foes as watchful as relentless, had always been preserved from a similar fate? Whence, if not by the miraculous presence of that heavenly portrait, whose modest eyelids had been raised, in moments of the greatest peril to the church, to give courage to the dejected, and faith to the wavering!

On another occasion, he commenced by a vivid description of the early youth, the education, the first exploits of Napoleon. He led you on step by step in his career; he successively brought him before you as the sullen sensitive boy at Brienne, the aspiring lieutenant of artillery, the young general of twenty-six, making Italy ring with his fame. On he went, gathering fresh ardour, more striking similes, more startling vehemence, as he dwelt on the resistless might which hurled down thrones and swept away kingdoms in a breath, till he brought him, flushed with conquest, to Ancona. "And here," he continued—"here, beneath this venerable dome, standing before the sacred picture, prepared to scoff and ridicule its divine powers—that man, with eagle eyes and folded arms, gives one hurried glance, and trembles. . . . Yes! The haughty brow which the fabled thunders of Jove might have encircled, is bent before that benign though reproachful gaze. His sallow cheek grows ashy pale as those heavenly orbs unclose upon him! His limbs totter; the sacrilegious hand which was stretched forth to lay hold on the venerated image is withdrawn, and he hastens away, sternly forbidding its removal or inspection!"

As a last specimen of this attractive, but certainly peculiar style of pulpit oratory, I ought to quote from a a magnificent delineation, with which he opened another of his discourses, of the terror that marks the progress of the Destroying Angel, scattering pestilence from his sable wings, with desolation and mourning in his wake. But my limits forbid anything beyond a mere sketch of the subjects on which he enlarged, with a graphic power, a scenic effect—if I may use the term—of which it is impossible to convey any just conception. The dread judgment on the first-born of Egypt, the plague sent on the murmuring Israelites—the dire records of the dark ages, when cities were made desolate, and whole populations swept away by similar awful visitations—all were detailed with harrowing power. Passing on from these to modern times, he addressed himself more particularly to the feelings of his auditors, by recalling the ravages which the cholera had made a few years previous in Ancona, when, out of its *then* population of 25,000, 1000 were swept away; and finally bade them ascribe their own preservation—the final disappearance of the scourge—to the wondrous picture having been borne, amid the tears and supplications of the inhabitants, in solemn procession through the streets. "Give me, O Maria!" he cried with transport, striking himself upon the breast, "give me a spring-tide of roses and hyacinths to weave in garlands for thy shrine; give me the laurel-wreath of genius, the monarch's crown of gems; give me all that earth holds beautiful or rare, to cast in tribute at thy feet. Give me eloquence to inspire, fervour to incite, persuasion to reclaim—give all to me, who yet am nothing, to be consecrated to thy service. Let me gaze on those celestial eyes, which so benignly opened upon Ancona, and gather there undying ardour and unconquerable love, our only hope, our only refuge."

After an address of this description, an approving murmur used to be discernable among the crowd, while now and then an irrepressible "bravo," or a patronizing "bene, bene," would be heard. But apart from the peasants—who, as I have said, flocked in large numbers to these ceremonies—and the poor old women, whose withered lips and palsied fingers were ever busy in saying their rosary and counting its beads, I should be sorry to have to estimate how much real devotion dwelt in the hearts of the multitude which daily congregated at the duomo, as soon, at least, as the excitement which such fiery appeals would naturally produce upon the susceptible temperaments of the south, had worn away.

As for the young men, of whom there were numbers always present, I heard from various sources that they had no more thought of anything religious in what they heard or witnessed, than if they were in a theatre or a forum; they were there solely to enjoy Padre G——'s eloquent descriptions, to look about them, and to kill time.—*Chambers's Journal.*

* Acts xiv. 5. and 19. † Acts xvii. 5.

"WANDERER'S" SKETCHES.

No. VI.

Steamer Jourdain, June 4, 1857.

Memories of a few things in England I have already given you. But since then I have passed through France. Beautiful France! Well called so—in all the skill of its arts, the thrift of its agriculture, the gorgeousness of its hotels and cities, and the myriads of contrivances for human gratification and indulgence. Were there no world but this, well might we say, Beautiful France! In no part of the world can man say with so much effect, Let us eat and drink, and rise up to play, for to-morrow we die. It is a land contrived for a world without souls, and never have I seen it look so attractive, joyous, and pleasure-seeking and giving as now. The aspect of prosperity and increase is everywhere, not less in the country towns than in Paris. To the young and unreflecting, to those for whom life is the gratification of appetite, there is everything in France. But to the serious mind, believing the Word of God, and looking to eternity for man's reality, there is something fearfully gloomy in this very excitement. It is like dancing to the execution, and shouting laughter in the midst of the despair of multitudes. Such an absence of everything like religion one sees nowhere as in France, so that the feeling becomes strong, it is fearful to be in this place. This was never more remarkable to me than in this visit.

The windows of the shops bear the signs of the most unblushing indecency. In the shops under the great new Hotel de Louvre, in Paris, erected expressly for the English and Americans, there are displayed pictures in open sight far beyond anything ever seen in public before. The very signs of Sodom and Pompeii are gathered for the eyes of visitors in open day. The course of sin has proceeded to a point which renders it fearful indeed. But that which marks Paris as the index of France, is its destitution of a Sabbath. They know no Sabbath there. Every species of trade and work goes on as usual. In my walk to church in the morning they were building houses, working in all the shops, and pursuing the regular avocations of the week with no restraint, while on this very day there was a grand review of the troops, and races of very peculiar excitement advertised at Versailles. My valet thought it very strange that I would not suffer him to take two youths who are travelling with me to these Sunday sights. "Sunday great day, sair," was his remonstrance. I was happy to find that American boys had no gusto for his "great day." They preferred to go with me to church. I can hardly tell you their amazement at what they saw in the morning. Such a Sabbath they had never seen. The quietness of New York on this holy day was repeatedly referred to in comparison by them.

But when our Sabbath was closing, I thought it wise to let them see for themselves how Paris keeps the Sabbath, that they might judge of the comparative worth of its observance and neglect. I walked with them through the Champs D'Elysee, where was every conceivable variety of human amusement and riot, high and low, from the most gorgeous display of singing women on stages surrounded by immense plate glass, except in front, down to the lowest and vilest of the mountebank theatres. Every species of gambling seemed to be collected there. Here was what the English Sunday League had endeavored to accomplish in England. Here was what a similar class in our country would love to produce. These youth shrank back with amazement and horror. Well they might. The mind of an American must be schooled in sin to look upon such a scene with any other feeling. We returned with a grateful feeling for our Sabbaths at home—acknowledging to each other that there was no happier way to pass the Sabbath than God's own way; and the nearer we could come to that, the happier the day would be. I have seen Paris repeatedly before. But I have never seen human wickedness so shameless, and its lures spread out so unshrinkingly there before.

In the evening I heard from a friend that a service of American worship is held there in the afternoon of every Sabbath. I heard nothing of it before. There was no public way in which it was brought to view in my hotel. He told me that Mr. Kirk, who officiated, used the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church, though the assembly was considered that of a Congregational Church. There were about two hundred persons attending, mostly Americans, and the occasion was interesting. But I had no means of obtaining very particular information of the real character of the effort or its ultimate design. It would have given me pleasure to have known of it before. The English churches were very crowded, not being able to receive all the people who came to them. They are, however, peculiarly English, and have no influence, and appear to desire to have none, upon the French population. Indeed, I suspect they keep quite aloof from the French Protestants, who have to struggle by themselves. These devoted Christians are doing all they can do, I imagine, to succor France, and rescue it from a Sabbath-despising Popery. But they are few, and work amidst great difficulties. It is a great contest. But it is a remarkable display. Here is the legitimate fruit of Popery unobstructed. It takes away from man the Bible and the Sabbath, and gives him license for every crime and every indulgence. God preserve our beloved land from its soul-destroying dominion and influence.

WANDERER.

(*From the St. John Church Witness.*)

The spirit of bigotry and intolerance is again manifesting itself on the continent of Europe. It seems, indeed, to be the firm determination of Popish rulers to crush out every spark of religious liberty existing in their respective countries. Protestantism has of late made great progress among all classes, and to prevent its further spread force must be used. We need not refer to Spain, or Naples, or Austria, where bigotry has for ages found its home; but only to those countries where the cause of civilization and progress is allowed to have made the greatest progress—viz., France and Sardinia.

"In France, under the regime of a dynasty whose founder so thoroughly identified himself with the principle of religious liberty, there is at this present moment going on a most determined effort to revive and carry out, in all their integrity, the old penal laws against every one who dares to differ from the Roman Catholic faith. If in any town or village, any Protestants meet together for worship, and their number exceeds twenty, the ecclesiastical and government authorities at once attack them, unite their agencies for the purpose of convicting them, and for making them obnoxious to the penalties of an obsolete law. On the 12th June last, a Protestant pastor and thirty-four of his flock, were brought before the tribunal of Vendome, and each sentenced to a fine of fifty francs, for no other crime than that of having met together for the purpose of worshipping God according to their conscience. Some weeks previously, another Protestant had been heavily fined for reading a chapter of the Bible, without note or comment, to a few Protestants hastily assembled at an extemporised meeting in a farm-yard. The Romish priest or *cure* had charged him "with having turned the Roman Catholic religion into contempt,"—his "contempt" consisting in a disbelief of the new papal dogma of "the immaculate conception." This zealous *cure*, however, had omitted to inform the court of the provocation he was the first to give to"