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Religious Miscellany

Angel Music.

When the twilight sweeps 'neath the azure veil,
And the sweet flowers sigh, the day grows pale.
Then an angel comes on her silver wings,
And a golden harp in her hand she brings;
Soft, sweet and low,
Rich numbers flow,
And I weep for joy while the angel sings!

O! the love rays fall from her dew-filled eye,
Like the soft-star beams from the twilight sky,
And she fans my brow with fragrant wings,
While she gently strikes on the golden strings,
Soft, sweet and low,
Rich numbers flow,
And I weep for joy while the angel sings!

Like the soft south wind when he weeps the leaves,
Like the glad bird's note in his love-wreathed bower,
Like the thrilling sigh of the wind's sharp string,
Are the rapture tones that the angel sings!
Soft, sweet and low,
Rich breathings flow,
And I dream of love when the angel sings!

Like the plaintive voice of the moaning pine,
Like the wild wail of the heaving brine,
Like the groans that sweep on the north-wind's wings,
Is the strange, sad song that the angel sings!
Dark, deep, and low,
Sad moanings flow,
And I weep o'er the lone while the angel sings!

Then a lofty strain on a rich harp swells,
And the soul of bliss in its music dwells,
And the tide of glee o'er its glowing strings,
Flows fresh and free from Edna Spring!
Soft, sweet and low,
Rich breathings flow,
And I dream of heaven, while the angel sings.

A Roman Sermon.

Rev. Wm. Arthur, in his new volume "Italy in Transition," about to be published by Messrs. Harper & Brothers, gives the following curious account of a sermon by one of our preachers addressing his hearers as "Gentlemen!"

At the great church of St. Petronius was the largest congregation I ever saw to hear a sermon in a Romish church. Over the pulpit was spread an awning of canvas to assist the voice, and below that a heavy sounding board. The preacher was a dark Capuchin, who had already, during Lent, excited much attention. In the very heavy shade created by awning and sounding-board, nothing could be seen but the yellow oval of his face, above the thin black beard which hung down undistinguishably in the general gloom. The only other point visible, besides this oval, was the white cord round his waist, and the yellow bands when they moved. In darkness that little oval was set, and out of darkness came the deep, rich, plaintive voice, and against a black-ground of darkness the white waist-cord lay, and the hands were waved. It was the very thing for Rembrandt to have painted; and some of his disciples ought to have been there.

He addressed the people by the style of "Signori," (Gentlemen,) as I had formerly heard done at Milan; but with this friar the term "Gentleman" came as oft as "Beloved" does with some preachers at home. He poured out a torrent of rich sound, modulated with the greatest skill, and adorned by manly bearing, and in the main dignified gesture. He was a speaker of very uncommon power. The Church of Rome does not descend to the reading of sermons. If men can preach, they are employed to do so; if not, let them sit alone. This man could preach, and that with a witness.

His subject was "The Glory of Priesthood;" and the proposition he laid down was this: "The defamations uttered by the laity against the priesthood are an impudent injustice." He began by saying that he did not wonder at heretics, and Turks, and atheists maligning the priests, but the shocking thing was that it should be done by Catholics. In all ages and nations the priest had been held in sacred regard. Among the Jews, among the old Egyptians—of whose ideas the hieroglyphics had given us back some notion—among the Persians, among the Greeks and Romans, the priest was ever a public power to whom men looked in all junctures that involved the crisis of life: the Brahmin in India, the Mandarin in China, and the Llama in Tartary, was often treated as a kind of god. So, from the foundation of the Christian priesthood it has continued to be held in holy honor. But of late it has become the fashion to malign it. There were representations as the enemies of good, the patrons of all evil, obstacles to human progress, dangerous to liberties and repose, and even injurious to animal life. He undertook to show that all was flagrantly unjust. Then he sat down for a moment, gave the people time to breathe, and rose and began.

"Do you know what is the dignity of a priest of the Roman Catholic Church? It is the highest under heaven! Kings are to be honored; magistrates are to have their respect; scholars, discoverers, and poets all merit honor; but upon this earth there is no dignity that for one moment can compare itself with that of the Roman priest. Do you know who a priest is? He is no less than a person who continues here upon earth the sacrifice of the Son of God! A person who daily renewes the great act of the economy of redemption! a person who holds the keys of the kingdom of God, and opens or shuts! a person who, with a few divine words, changes the elements of bread and wine into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ! a person who stands between you and God, hearkening to the confession of your sins, and pronouncing over you the absolution given by the Almighty! a person who, in infancy, makes you members of Christ; who, in youth, formally induces you by the sacrament into the communion of saints; who, when you are young and full of life, consecrates your union with his wife of your choice; who, in the day of reavement, brings the consolations of his

ven to the dark chambers of your friends; and who, when your own day of death comes, bid your soul depart in peace?" All good, all comfort, all true science, all the lightest pleasure to men, had come through the priest. In the early age the Church had its Chrysostom, Basil, Athanasius, Cyril, and a long list, which he regaled with the utmost rapidity, and wonderfully sonorous effect. Now, in our modern day, it had its equally illustrious list of names, which again he pointed out with the same fluency and force. But what was my astonishment, in the midst of these names, to hear those of Laennais and Giberti! The priests had been the patrons of the arts: here another list of artists whom they had made, from Michael Angelo to Canova. They had been the fathers of knowledge: here a long citation of learned and scientific priests. They had been the founders of all charitable institutions: and here was really the most eloquent part of his sermon, but one impossible to report from memory. Selecting every great work in the history of the Church which had been done by an individual, characterizing it in a word, he concluded each sentence with, "This is the benefit of a priesthood!"

Now, the priests were guides of life, the lights of the world; they were the salt of the earth, they were the staff of society, they were the shield of the people, they were the glory of the past, they were the hope of the future." Again he sat down, and gave the people the benefit of a long respite. Rising up, he exclaimed, "But there are bad priests, many of them!" but what does that prove? That bad Christians; but that does not prove that Christianity itself is bad." And so he went on. In this part of his oration was certainly the least effective. Still it was a grand declamation; read eloquently, joined with manly courage, and, so far as one could judge, the whole was sustained by perfect honesty. The man seemed to mean every word he said, and to look on the priesthood, of which he was the organ, as the one institution upon which the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind depended. The effrontery appeared to cost him little effort, and of the blasphemy into which his grandiosities often led him he seemed unconscious. The people heard well. A few looked as if his reproaches troubled them; some were evidently angry; but the most seemed just to say, "He does it very cleverly." Opposite sat the Chapter of the Cathedral, a numerous body in rich robes—some of them fine-looking men, but others of dark and dangerous countenances. His enthusiasm did not appear to carry them along. They seemed more uneasy than elated, and as they retired there was more of anxiety than of any other feeling upon their countenances.

On! how one would have liked to stand up then and preach, giving the honest man his theme credit for every good man and good action he could justly cite; then, sweeping his false facts and false history to the winds, preach that to throng the one great High Priest, the one sacrifice, the one Mediator between God and man; and tell them of the truth, mock, and bring to shame the ministers of the Gospel upon the earth! One could not do that; but one could pray that He who holds the stars in his right-hand—and the stars are the messengers of the Churches—would call me to a better forth of strange doctrines, and a distributor of the peace of the Church.

But all this is changed now. The English residents of Calcutta will compare favorably in point of morality with any other large city in the world. The pulpit in which Henry Martyn preached is pointed out with pride to the stranger. The churchyard where lies the dust of Sidney Smith's "consecrated cobble" and his associates is regarded as a hallowed spot. The missionary meeting is crowded with sympathizing Christians; the churches are filled with devout worshippers, and even daily prayer-meetings have been held with encouraging success. In Bombay, Madras, and other large cities, similar changes have occurred, while the general character of the whole English population throughout the country has decidedly changed for the better. It is true, the work of reformation by no means complete, but has surely been commenced. The officers' club has not yet described that we think it refers, rather, to a custom when it is intended to condemn, and an white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, "I will give thee a white stone," that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers, rather, to a custom when it is intended to condemn, and an white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, "I will give thee a white stone," that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers, rather, to a custom when it is intended to condemn, and an white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, "I will give thee a white stone," that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers, rather, to a custom when it is intended to condemn, and an white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, "I will give thee a white stone," that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers, rather, to a custom when it is intended to condemn, and an white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; 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