

they did not seem to care which. He lay there half an hour before he was discovered by attendants at the pest-house, who came to his rescue and took him in. The uniform temperature here at sea the year round is eighty-five degrees. W. S. H.

LETTER FROM ITALY.

A CITY pre-eminently grave, an angular, gloomy collection of ponderous buildings, seemingly designed by professors and inhabited by savants from time immemorial. Entering the staid, serious precincts of Bologna, not a little intoxicated with the bewitching charms of Verona, the gorgeous beauty of Venice, is very much like the unexpected encounter of an awe-inspiring doctor in the moonlit alleys of some romantic garden.

There exists, unfortunately, but seldom "a happy medium" amongst Italian customs. For example, streets are either so narrow that at every instant, pursued by ruthless cabmen and other animals, one has to seek refuge in a hospitable doorway; or, on the other hand, the unfortunate pedestrian is hemmed in in such a manner that leaving home for air and sunshine is scarcely worth while. At Bologna, the latter fashion prevails. Arcades are everywhere—to right, to left, and beyond. Indeed, it would be difficult to find an unarcaded street. Picture an indefinite number of lofty, sober-looking edifices, all more or less alike, chilly and uninviting. Go where you will, the inevitable arcade covers the sidewalks. Finally, a despairing sense of imprisonment begins to weigh upon the soul, and although one may hitherto "have believed in nothing from the roof upwards," a wild, undefinable longing is felt—a longing for something above one's head not quite so positive and material as stone and mortar.

There is by no means a superabundance to interest the ordinary traveller in Bologna—its university, its leaning towers, its grand square—little else. Nowhere, perhaps, could the modern vehicles for conveying thought be dispensed with so easily as in Italy. The volubility of the ancients appears inherited in a most respectable degree by their quick-tongued descendants of to-day. The forum of Republican and Imperial times, the mediæval and modern piazza, with few modifications, present the same scenes of gesticulating, chattering humanity. Were a stranger suddenly to come across one of these great squares, crowded with groups of long-cloaked men, all, apparently, waiting for something, they don't know exactly what, he might imagine himself on the eve of some popular uprising; but, on the contrary, this lazy concourse is of a most peaceful turn of mind, enjoying two things dearest to the Italian's heart—talking and idleness.

The Piazza Vittorio Emanuele, a large, paved, open space, has, in common with a score of other piazze, a fountain and picturesque surrounding buildings. Here, on one side, rises the church of St. Petronio, intended to be the largest in Italy, but never finished. Its rough facade presents a very peculiar appearance, much like a wall divested of the marble or plaster destined to line it. The Palazzo Municipale, or Town Hall, the Palazzo del Podestà, or Mayor's Palace, both dating from the thirteenth century, and some minor buildings, enclose the quadrangle. The aspect of the square is mediæval truly, but the sombre, brownish stone, the massiveness, rather than a rich, picturesque beauty, of the neighbouring edifices, make the whole far less pleasing than the delightful Piazza delle Erbe, in Verona, the peculiar charm of which it would be difficult to find equalled.

The blighting hand laid upon so much in this fair land has not spared Bologna's university. Of the nearly ten thousand students it boasted in the thirteenth century there remain only four hundred to-day. In 1803 it was established in an old palace, but before that time, and from 1562, it occupied the Archiginnasio Antico, a building erected to this end. Here Galvani taught, and discovered galvanism in 1789. One may still see the charming little lecture room, preserved intact, where he made his experiments. There exists not, perhaps, a more beautiful anatomical amphitheatre, panelled in carved wood—linden, pine, and cedar of Lebanon. The statues of some of the greater professors of anatomy, likewise sculptured in wood, fill various niches about the walls, while a canopy over the tribune is borne by two anatomical figures of exquisite workmanship. Strange enough to discover among these illustrious teachers the effigy of a woman in grave cap and gown. But Madame Mauzolina is not the only fair one who has graced this university with her presence. Clotilda Tambroni (Greek), Laura Bassi (mathematics and physical science), and Novella d'Andrea have all added to its lustre. Curious in a country where there does not seem to be much talk about "the higher education of women." And these were by no means rough-featured old dames. Indeed, it is said the charms of one of the latter were so dangerous that she was forced to deliver her lectures from behind a curtain! Perchance, sweet girl-students here have learnt the best way to meet deep-rooted prejudice is to make it worth while for stiff-necked conventionality to yield.

A striking peculiarity of the Archiginnasio is that the brightly-painted arms of noble students entirely cover its walls within, and those of the court. The now deserted halls are devoted to a public library. On a tablet in one of the lecture rooms the inscription is to the effect that Rossini's "Stabat Mater" was performed here for the first time.

Of the thousand and one projects that haunt men's minds it is perhaps a fortunate thing but few are accomplished. The city of Bologna is disfigured by two of the most bizarre leaning towers one can imagine. Huge cracked chimneys they appear, without the slightest ornamentation. Rising in the centre of the town, the Torre Asinelli and the Torre Garisenda, named after their architects, are respectively three hundred and twenty and one hundred and sixty-three feet in height, and four and two feet out of the perpendicular. To Dante the giant Antæus seems like the latter "when a cloud passes over it." Not far from these huge sentinels stands the house of Rossini, bearing over the door the words, "*Non Domo Diminus, sed Domini Domus.*"

If the outward appearance of Bologna is cold, its inner aspect, that of its churches, is even colder. In Gothic edifices, with clustered pillars, groined roof, and stained windows, we require no further decoration. But it is very different in buildings of many other styles. Satisfying as they may be from a purely architectural point of view, they strike the ordinary observer in rather an unfavourable light. With few exceptions, however, Italian churches, as churches, are disappointing on the whole. It is hard to reconcile our preconceived idea of what an ecclesiastical edifice should be with the eminently unsympathetic specimens that meet us at every turn. Strange combinations, strange medleys often, when no style can be seen to a full advantage. But of all this later.

Bologna, in common with many other cities of Italy, boasts a work of art world renowned, to which our special homage is paid. Raphael's "St. Cecilia" holds the place of honour in its penacoteca, or picture gallery. As one by one all the wonderful scenes, contemplated with such passionate love and longing in cold prints and photos, come before us radiant with life and colour, Pygmalion-like, we can scarce suppress a little cry of rapture. The dearest objects of our hearts are warm-cheeked and living now, and the pictured landscape, no more pictured but a glorious reality.

The rich, calm beauty of the painting of "St. Cecilia" falls upon us as the fair saint's harmonies might have done—breathing peace and light and exquisite loveliness. Here we find a wonderful portrayal of the effects music produces on different minds: the simple enjoyment of the artist, the clerical pleasure of St. John and St. Augustine, the almost childish joy of Mary Magdalene, and, finally, the profound emotion it awakens in St. Paul. You know that strong, melancholy face, shadowed by a cloud of dark hair; the contracted brow; the sad, almost painful expression. Indeed, I think it is this figure which wakes in us the deepest admiration. Like sunbeams rushing in where none else would dare to tread, so have the subtle strains pierced through even to the most silent cells of that great heart, and the inexpressible, passionate thoughts find voice at length in the divine melody. Art does not always speak her grandest truths, reveal her loveliest charms, to the most skilled of her servants; nay, these would appear at times but cold interpreters, merely uttering the words that others may seize the spirit.

The marvellous beauty of St. Paul is cleverly enhanced by his mantle and underrobe of green and red; a soft, golden lustre is shed over St. Cecilia, by her yellow tunic, while the violet gown of Mary Magdalene is a perfect clothing for this charming figure.

Interesting as the cities of northern Italy are, we have, after all, only read the prelude to the poem ere we come to Florence and Rome. Doubtless, if not in reality at least in thought, you have wended your way many times through each, and a new description can tell you little more. Still, beauty and truth are things of which we never tire (or never should). So I take it for granted you will not object to wander once again upon the heights of St. Miniato; down by the river along the Lungarno; about the Piazza della Signoria; nay, nor even to thread some narrow ways that lead to the homes of the mighty souls who moved men to dare great deeds in centuries past. Come, it is Christmas morning, but the air is deliciously warm, the day perfect. There has been great clanging of bells, the shops are closed, and crowds of genial, buzzing loungers are many. Thus we shall gain by contemplating the city from afar. The Viale dei Colli they call the gently-winding road that from the southern gate of Florence, Porta Romana, leads to San Miniato. Every here and there, as we ascend, glimpses of loveliest scenery may be had, but not until the Piazzale Michelangelo is reached does the whole glorious panorama lie before us. We now stand on a projecting terrace, above rises the church, with the adjoining convents, and the little cemetery; below stretches the valley of the Arno; and farther away, like sentinels keeping watch around some sleeping beauty, the mountains guard the city. It is not an incomprehensible, irregular mass this Florence, as you see, but the most charming of pictures in the fittest of frames. Even from here one can discern much of that bold, sober architecture, so just an embodiment, as it were, of the proud, grave spirit reigning in centuries when its home was at the zenith of her glory. Between us and the principal part of the city flows the river, a narrow, muddy stream enough, but rapid. And now need I name tower and dome? This church to the right is Santa Croce, and here are buried not a few great Florentines. Ah! you recognise the marvellous cathedral—"Brunelleschi's wondrous dome," and the Campanile close by. There looks scornfully down the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio—a republican-looking tower truly, rising neither at the side nor in the centre of the Old Palace, but in the most arbitrary of positions between the two, an exceedingly ostentatious manifestation of unconventionality. S. Lorenzo, S. Maria Novella, can also be distinguished, but many well-known haunts are lost for us from here. Linger a little longer ere the sight fades. Drink one more draught of all this beauty, for it is just as well to see the whole, before we study the parts as after and now crowd fast upon the mind the memories which make of Florence a home, perhaps their dearest, to so many. For, after all, our truest friends and guides are not the ones who living, flavour their theories to our taste; but those whose "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are immutable, uttered by lips long cold. It is pleasant thus to contemplate, to dream, while the fires in the west burn low; only the light fades fast, and already the blue mist has crept from the valley up the mountains, over the city, shutting out at length even the cypress-covered heights of Fiesole from our sight. L. L.

MALHERBE having dined with the Bishop of Rouen, who was a dull preacher, was asked by him to adjourn from the table to the church, where he was then going to preach. "Pardon me," said Malherbe, "but I can sleep very well where I am."